


ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALES



ILLUSTRATED *By* MONRO S. ORR

To Priscilla, with
love from Uncle Wilfrid
& Aunt Ethel.

Christmas 1933.



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ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALES

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ALL AT ONCE THE WINDOW FLEW OPEN

Fr.

[See p. 71]

FAIRY TALES

By

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN



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ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALES

THE TINDER BOX

THERE came a soldier marching along the high-road—*one, two! one, two!* He had his knapsack on his back and a sabre by his side, for he had been in the wars, and now he wanted to go home. And on the way he met with an old witch: she was very hideous, and her under-lip hung down upon her breast. She said, "Good evening, soldier. What a fine sword you have, and what a big knapsack! You're a proper soldier! Now you shall have as much money as you like to have."

"I thank you, you old witch!" said the soldier.

"Do you see that great tree?" quoth the witch; and she pointed to a tree which stood beside them. "It's quite hollow inside. You must climb to the top, and then you'll see a hole, through which you can let yourself down and get deep into the tree. I'll tie a rope round your body, so that I can pull you up again when you call me."

"What am I to do down in the tree?" asked the soldier.

"Get money," replied the witch. "Listen to me. When you come down to the earth under the tree, you will find yourself in a great hall: it is quite light, for above three hundred lamps are burning there. Then

you will see three doors; these you can open, for the keys are hanging there. If you go into the first chamber, you'll see a great chest in the middle of the floor; on this chest sits a dog, and he's got a pair of eyes as big as two teacups. But you need not care for that. I'll give you my blue-checked apron, and you can spread it out upon the floor; then go up quickly and take the dog, and set him on my apron; then open the chest, and take as many shillings as you like. They are of copper: if you prefer silver, you must go into the second chamber. But there sits a dog with a pair of eyes as big as mill-wheels. But do not you care for that. Set him upon my apron, and take some of the money. And if you want gold, you can have that too—in fact, as much as you can carry—if you go into the third chamber. But the dog that sits on the money-chest there has two eyes as big as round towers. He is a fierce dog, you may be sure; but you needn't be afraid, for all that. Only set him on my apron, and he won't hurt you; and take out of the chest as much gold as you like."

"That's not so bad," said the soldier. "But what am I to give you, you old witch? for you will not do it for nothing, I fancy."

"No," replied the witch, "not a single shilling will I have. You shall only bring me an old tinder-box which my grandmother forgot when she was down there last."

"Then tie the rope round my body," cried the soldier.

"Here it is," said the witch, "and here's my blue-checked apron."

Then the soldier climbed up into the tree, let himself slip down into the hole, and stood, as the witch had said, in the great hall where the three hundred lamps were burning.

Now he opened the first door. Ugh! there sat the dog with eyes as big as teacups, staring at him. "You're a nice fellow!" exclaimed the soldier; and he set him on the witch's apron, and took as many copper shillings as his pockets would hold, and then locked the chest, set the dog on it again, and went into the second chamber. Aha! there sat the dog with eyes as big as mill-wheels.

"You should not stare so hard at me," said the soldier; "you might strain your eyes." And he set the dog upon the witch's apron. And when he saw the silver money in the chest, he threw away all the copper money he had, and filled his pockets and his knapsack with silver only. Then he went into the third chamber. Oh, but that was horrid! The dog there really had eyes as big as towers, and they turned round and round in his head like wheels.

"Good evening!" said the soldier; and he touched his cap, for he had never seen such a dog as that before. When he had looked at him a little more closely, he thought, "That will do," and lifted him down to the floor, and opened the chest. Mercy! what a quantity of gold was there! He could buy with it the whole town, and the sugar sucking-pigs of the cake-woman, and all the tin soldiers, whips, and rocking-horses in the whole world. Yes, that was a quantity of money! Now the soldier threw away all the silver coin with which he had filled his pockets and his knapsack, and took gold instead: yes, all his pockets, his knapsack, his boots, and his cap were filled, so that he could scarcely walk. Now indeed he had plenty of money. He put the dog on the chest, shut the door, and then called up through the tree, "Now pull me up, you old witch."

"Have you the tinder-box?" asked the witch.

"Plague on it!" exclaimed the soldier, "I had clean forgotten that." And he went and brought it.

The witch drew him up, and he stood on the high-road again, with pockets, boots, knapsack, and cap full of gold.

"What are you going to do with the tinder-box?" asked the soldier.

"That's nothing to you," retorted the witch. "You've had your money—just give me the tinder-box."

"Nonsense!" said the soldier. "Tell me directly what you're going to do with it, or I'll draw my sword and cut off your head."

"No!" cried the witch.

So the soldier cut off her head. There she lay! But he tied up all his money in her apron, took it on his back like a bundle, put the tinder-box in his pocket, and went straight off toward the town.

That was a splendid town! And he put up at the very best inn, and asked for the finest rooms, and ordered his favourite dishes, for now he was rich, as he had so much money. The servant who had to clean his boots certainly thought them a remarkably old pair for such a rich gentleman; but he had not bought any new ones yet. The next day he procured proper boots and handsome clothes. Now our soldier had become a fine gentleman; and the people told him of all the splendid things which were in their city, and about the King, and what a pretty princess the King's daughter was.

"Where can one get to see her?" asked the soldier.

"She is not to be seen at all," said they all together;

"she lives in a great copper castle, with a great many walls and towers round about it; no one but the King may go in and out there, for it has been prophesied that she shall marry a common soldier, and the King can't bear that."

"I should like to see her," thought the soldier; but he could not get leave to do so. Now he lived merrily, went to the theatre, drove in the King's garden, and gave much money to the poor; and this was very kind of him, for he knew from old times how hard it is when one has not a shilling. Now he was rich, had fine clothes, and gained many friends, who all said he was a rare one, a true cavalier; and that pleased the soldier well. But as he spent money every day and never earned any, he had at last only two shillings left; and he was obliged to turn out of the fine rooms in which he had dwelt, and had to live in a little garret under the roof, and clean his boots for himself, and mend them with a darning-needle. None of his friends came to see him, for there were too many stairs to climb.

It was quite dark one evening, and he could not even buy himself a candle, when it occurred to him that there was a candle-end in the tinder-box which he had taken out of the hollow tree into which the witch had helped him. He brought out the tinder-box and the candle-end; but as soon as he struck fire and the sparks rose up from the flint, the door flew open, and the dog who had eyes as big as a couple of teacups, and whom he had seen in the tree, stood before him, and said:

"What are my lord's commands?"

"What is this?" said the soldier. "That's a famous tinder-box, if I can get everything with it that I want! Bring me some money," said he to the dog; and *whisk!*

the dog was gone, and *whisk!* he was back again, with a great bag full of shillings in his mouth.

Now the soldier knew what a capital tinder-box this was. If he struck it once, the dog came who sat upon the chest of copper money; if he struck it twice, the dog came who had the silver; and if he struck it three times, then appeared the dog who had the gold. Now the soldier moved back into the fine rooms, and appeared again in handsome clothes, and all his friends knew him again, and cared very much for him indeed.

Once he thought to himself, "It is a very strange thing that one cannot get to see the Princess. They all say she is very beautiful; but what is the use of that, if she has always to sit in the great copper castle with the many towers? Can I not get to see her at all? Where is my tinder-box?" And so he struck a light, and *whisk!* came the dog with eyes as big as teacups.

"It is midnight, certainly," said the soldier, "but I should very much like to see the Princess, only for one little moment.

And the dog was outside the door directly, and, before the soldier thought it, came back with the Princess. She sat upon the dog's back and slept; and every one could see she was a real princess, for she was so lovely. The soldier could not refrain from kissing her, for he was a thorough soldier. Then the dog ran back again with the Princess. But when morning came, and the King and Queen were drinking tea, the Princess said she had had a strange dream the night before, about a dog and a soldier—that she had ridden upon the dog, and the soldier had kissed her.

"That would be a fine history!" said the Queen.

So one of the old Court ladies had to watch the next

night by the Princess's bed, to see if this was really a dream, or what it might be.

The soldier had a great longing to see the lovely Princess again; so the dog came in the night, took her away, and ran as fast as he could. But the old lady put on water-boots, and ran just as fast after him. When she saw that they both entered a great house, she thought, "Now I know where it is," and with a bit of chalk she drew a great cross on the door. Then she went home and lay down, and the dog came out with the Princess; but when he saw that there was a cross drawn on the door where the soldier lived, he took a piece of chalk too, and drew crosses on all the doors in the town. And that was cleverly done, for now the lady could not find the right door, because all the doors had crosses upon them.

In the morning early came the King and Queen, the old Court lady, and all the officers, to see where it was the Princess had been. "Here it is!" said the King, when he saw the first door with a cross upon it. "No, my dear husband, it is there!" said the Queen, who described another door which also showed a cross. "But there is one, and there is one!" said all, for wherever they looked there were crosses on the doors. So they saw that it would avail them nothing if they searched on.

But the Queen was an exceedingly clever woman, who could do more than ride in a coach. She took her great gold scissors, cut a piece of silk into pieces, and made a neat little bag; this bag she filled with fine wheat flour, and tied it on the Princess's back; and when that was done, she cut a little hole in the bag, so that the flour would be scattered along all the way which the Princess should take.

In the night the dog came again, took the Princess on his back, and ran with her to the soldier, who loved her very much, and would gladly have been a prince, so that he might have her for his wife. The dog did not notice at all how the flour ran out in a stream from the castle to the windows of the soldier's house, where he ran up the wall with the Princess. In the morning the King and the Queen saw well enough where their daughter had been, and they took the soldier and put him in prison.

There he sat. Oh, but it was dark and disagreeable there! And they said to him, "To-morrow you shall be hanged." That was not amusing to hear, and he had left his tinder-box at the inn. In the morning he could see, through the iron grating of the little window, how the people were hurrying out of the town to see him hanged. He heard the drums beat and saw the soldiers marching. All the people were running out, and among them was a shoemaker's boy with leather apron and slippers, and he galloped so fast that one of his slippers flew off, and came right against the wall where the soldier sat looking through the iron grating.

"Hallo, you shoemaker's boy! you needn't be in such a hurry," cried the soldier to him: "it will not begin till I come. But if you will run to where I lived, and bring me my tinder-box, you shall have four shillings; but you must put your best leg foremost."

The shoemaker's boy wanted to get the four shillings, so he went and brought the tinder-box, and—well, we shall hear now what happened.

Outside the town a great gallows had been built, and round it stood the soldiers and many thousands of people. The King and Queen sat on a splendid throne,

opposite to the judges and the whole Council. The soldier already stood upon the ladder; but as they were about to put the rope round his neck, he said that before a poor criminal suffered his punishment an innocent request was always granted to him. He wanted very much to smoke a pipe of tobacco, and it would be the last pipe he should smoke in the world. The King would not say "No" to this; so the soldier took his tinder-box, and struck fire. One—two—three!—and there suddenly stood all the dogs—the one with eyes as big as teacups, the one with eyes as large as mill-wheels, and the one whose eyes were as big as round towers.

"Help me now, so that I may not be hanged," said the soldier.

And the dogs fell upon the judges and all the Council, seized one by the leg and another by the nose, and tossed them all many feet into the air, so that they fell down and were all broken to pieces.

"I won't!" cried the King; but the biggest dog took him and the Queen, and threw them after the others. Then the soldiers were afraid, and the people cried, "Little soldier, you shall be our King, and marry the beautiful Princess!"

So they put the soldier into the King's coach, and all the three dogs darted on in front and cried, "Hurrah!" and the boys whistled through their fingers, and the soldiers presented arms. The Princess came out of the copper castle, and became Queen, and she liked that well enough. The wedding lasted a week, and the three dogs sat at the table too, and opened their eyes wider than ever at all they saw.

GREAT CLAUS AND LITTLE CLAUS

THERE lived two men in one village, and they had the same name—each was called Claus; but one had four horses, and the other only a single horse. To distinguish them from each other, folk called him who had four horses Great Claus, and the one who had only a single horse Little Claus. Now we shall hear what happened to each of them, for this is a true story.

The whole week through Little Claus was obliged to plough for Great Claus, and to lend him his one horse; then Great Claus helped him out with all his four, but only once a week, and that on a holiday. Hurrah! how Little Claus smacked his whip over all five horses, for they were as good as his own on that one day. The sun shone gaily, and all the bells in the steeples were ringing; the people were all dressed in their best, and were going to church, with their hymn-books under their arms, to hear the clergyman preach, and they saw Little Claus ploughing with five horses; but he was so merry that he smacked his whip again and again, and cried, "Gee up, all my five horses!"

"You must not talk so," said Great Claus, "for only the one horse is yours."

But when no one was passing Little Claus forgot that he was not to say this, and he cried, "Gee up, all my horses!"

"Now, I must beg of you to let that alone," cried Great Claus, "for if you say it again, I shall hit your

horse on the head, so that he will fall down dead, and then it will be all over with him."

"I will certainly not say it any more," said Little Claus.

But when people came by soon afterward, and nodded "Good day" to him, he became very glad, and thought it looked very well, after all, that he had five horses to plough his field; and so he smacked his whip again, and cried, "Gee up, all my horses!"

"I'll 'gee up' your horses!" said Great Claus. And he took the hatchet and hit the only horse of Little Claus on the head, so that he fell down, and was dead immediately.

"Oh, now I haven't any horse at all!" said Little Claus; and he began to cry.

Then he flayed the horse, and let the hide dry in the wind, and put it in a sack and hung it over his shoulder, and went to the town to sell his horse's skin.

He had a very long way to go, and was obliged to pass through a great dark wood, and the weather became dreadfully bad. He went quite astray, and before he got into the right way again it was evening, and it was too far to get home again or even to the town before nightfall.

Close by the road stood a large farmhouse. The shutters were closed outside the windows, but the light could still be seen shining out over them.

"I may be able to get leave to stop here through the night," thought Little Claus; and he went and knocked.

The farmer's wife opened the door; but when she heard what he wanted she told him to go away, declaring that her husband was not at home, and she would not receive strangers.

"Then I shall have to lie outside," said Little Claus. And the farmer's wife shut the door in his face.

Close by stood a great haystack, and between this and the farmhouse was a little outhouse thatched with straw.

"Up there I can lie," said Little Claus, when he looked up at the roof; "that is a capital bed. I suppose the stork won't fly down and bite me in the legs." For a living stork was standing on the roof, where he had his nest.

Now Little Claus climbed up to the roof of the shed, where he lay, and turned round to settle himself comfortably. The wooden shutters did not cover the windows at the top, and he could look straight into the room. There was a great table, with the cloth laid, and wine and roast meat and a glorious fish upon it. The farmer's wife and the clerk were seated at table, and nobody besides. She was filling his glass, and he was digging his fork into the fish, for that was his favourite dish.

"If one could only get some too!" thought Little Claus, as he stretched out his head toward the window. Heavens! what a glorious cake he saw standing there! Yes, certainly, that *was* a feast.

Now he heard some one riding along the high-road. It was the woman's husband, who was coming home. He was a good man enough, but he had the strange peculiarity that he could never bear to see a clerk. If a clerk appeared before his eyes he became very angry. And that was the reason why the clerk had gone to the wife to wish her 'Good day,' because he knew that her husband was not at home; and the good woman therefore put the best fare she had before him. But when they heard the man coming they were frightened, and

the woman begged the clerk to creep into a great empty chest which stood there; and he did so, for he knew the husband could not bear the sight of a clerk. The woman quickly hid all the excellent meat and wine in her baking-oven; for if the man had seen that, he would have been certain to ask what it meant.

"Ah, yes!" sighed Little Claus, up in his shed, when he saw all the good fare put away.

"Is there any one up there?" asked the farmer; and he looked up at Little Claus. "Who are you lying there? Better come with me into the room."

And Little Claus told him how he had lost his way, and asked leave to stay there for the night.

"Yes, certainly," said the farmer, "but first we must have something to live on."

The woman received them both in a very friendly way, spread the cloth on a long table, and gave them a great dish of porridge. The farmer was hungry, and ate with a good appetite; but Little Claus could not help thinking of the capital roast meat, fish, and cake which he knew were in the oven. Under the table, at his feet, he had laid the sack with the horse's hide in it; for we know that he had come out to sell it in the town. He could not relish the porridge, so he trod upon the sack, and the dry skin inside crackled quite loudly.

"Why, what have you in your sack?" asked the farmer.

"Oh, that's a magician," answered Little Claus. "He says we are not to eat porridge, for he has conjured the oven full of roast meat, fish, and cake."

"Wonderful!" cried the farmer; and he opened the oven in a hurry, and found all the dainty provisions which his wife had hidden there, but which, as he

thought, the wizard had conjured forth. The woman dared not say anything, but put the things at once on the table; and so they both ate of the meat, the fish, and the cake. Now Little Claus again trod on his sack, and made the hide creak.

"What does he say now?" said the farmer.

"He says," replied Claus, "that he has conjured three bottles of wine for us too, and that they are standing there in the corner behind the oven."

Now the woman was obliged to bring out the wine which she had hidden, and the farmer drank it and became very merry. He would have been very glad to see such a conjurer as Little Claus had there in the sack.

"Can he conjure the demon forth?" asked the farmer. "I should like to see him, for now I am merry."

"Oh, yes," said Little Claus, "my conjurer can do anything that I ask of him.—Can you not?" he added, and trod on the hide, so that it crackled. "He says 'Yes.' But the demon is very ugly to look at: we had better not see him."

"Oh, I'm not at all afraid. Pray, what will he look like?"

"Why, he'll look the very image of a clerk."

"Ha!" said the farmer, "that *is* ugly! You must know, I can't bear the sight of a clerk. But it doesn't matter now, for I know that he's a demon, so I shall easily stand it. Now I have courage, but he must not come too near me."

"Now I will ask my conjurer," said Little Claus; and he trod on the sack and held his ear down.

"What does he say?"



"HU!" HE CRIED, AND SPRANG BACKWARD

"He says you may go and open the chest that stands in the corner, and you will see the demon crouching in it; but you must hold the lid so that he doesn't slip out."

"Will you help me to hold him?" asked the farmer. And he went to the chest where the wife had hidden the real clerk, who sat in there and was very much afraid. The farmer opened the lid a little way and peeped in underneath it.

"Hu!" he cried, and sprang backward. "Yes, now I've seen him, and he looked exactly like our clerk. Oh, that was dreadful!"

Upon this they must drink. So they sat and drank until late into the night.

"You must sell me that conjurer," said the farmer. "Ask as much as you like for him: I'll give you a whole bushel of money directly."

"No, that I can't do," said Little Claus: "only think how much use I can make of this conjurer."

"Oh, I should so much like to have him!" cried the farmer; and he went on begging.

"Well," said Little Claus at last, "as you have been so kind as to give me shelter for the night, I will let it be so. You shall have the conjurer for a bushel of money; but I must have the bushel heaped up."

"That you shall have," replied the farmer. "But you must take the chest yonder away with you. I will not keep it in my house an hour. One cannot know—perhaps he may be there still."

Little Claus gave the farmer his sack with the dry hide in it, and got in exchange a whole bushel of money, and that heaped up. The farmer also gave him a big truck, on which to carry off his money and chest.

"Farewell!" said Little Claus; and he went off with his money and the big chest, in which the clerk was still sitting.

On the other side of the wood was a great deep river. The water rushed along so rapidly that one could scarcely swim against the stream. A fine new bridge had been built over it. Little Claus stopped on the centre of the bridge, and said quite loud, so that the clerk could hear it:

"Oh, what shall I do with this stupid chest? It's as heavy as if stones were in it. I shall only get tired if I drag it any farther, so I'll throw it into the river: if it swims home to me, well and good; and if it does not, it will be no great matter."

And he took the chest with one hand, and lifted it up a little, as if he intended to throw it into the river.

"No! let be!" cried the clerk from within the chest; "let me out first!"

"Hu!" exclaimed Little Claus, pretending to be frightened, "he's in there still! I must make haste and throw him into the river, that he may be drowned."

"Oh, no, no!" screamed the clerk. "I'll give you a whole bushful of money if you'll let me go."

"Why, that's another thing!" said Little Claus; and he opened the chest.

The clerk crept quickly out, pushed the empty chest into the water, and went to his house, where Little Claus received a whole bushful of money. He had already received one from the farmer, and so now he had his truck loaded with money.

"See, I've been well paid for the horse," he said to himself when he had got home to his own room, and was emptying all the money into a heap in the middle of

the floor. "That will vex Great Claus when he hears how rich I have grown through my one horse; but I won't tell him about it outright."

So he sent a boy to Great Claus to ask for a bushel measure.

"What can he want with it?" thought Great Claus. And he smeared some tar underneath the measure, so that some part of whatever was measured should stick to it. And thus it happened; for when he received the measure back, there were three new eight-shilling pieces adhering thereto.

"What's this?" cried Great Claus; and he ran off at once to Little Claus. "Where did you get all that money from?"

"Oh, that's for my horse's skin. I sold it yesterday evening."

"That's really being well paid," said Great Claus. And he ran home in a hurry, took an axe, and killed all his four horses; then he flayed them, and carried off their skins to the town."

"Hides! hides! who'll buy any hides?" he cried through the streets.

All the shoemakers and tanners came running, and asked how much he wanted for them.

"A bushel of money for each!" said Great Claus.

"Are you mad?" said they. "Do you think we have money by the bushel?"

"Hides! hides!" he cried again; and to all who asked him what the hides would cost he replied, "A bushel of money."

"He wants to make fools of us," they all exclaimed. And the shoemakers took their straps, and the tanners their aprons, and they began to beat Great Claus.

"Hides! hides!" they called after him, jeeringly. "Yes, we'll tan your hide for you till the red broth runs down. Out of the town with you!" And Great Claus made the best haste he could, for he had never yet been thrashed as he was thrashed now.

"Well," said he when he got home, "Little Claus shall pay for this. I'll kill him for it."

Now, at Little Claus's the old grandmother had died. She had been very harsh and unkind to him, but yet he was very sorry, and took the dead woman and laid her in his warm bed to see if she would not come to life again. There he intended she should remain all through the night, and he himself would sit in the corner and sleep on a chair, as he had often done before. As he sat there, in the night the door opened, and Great Claus came in with his axe. He knew where Little Claus's bed stood; and, going straight up to it, he hit the old grandmother on the head, thinking she was Little Claus.

"D'ye see," said he, "you shall not make a fool of me again." And then he went home.

"That's a bad fellow, that man," said Little Claus. "He wanted to kill me. It was a good thing for my old grandmother that she was dead already. He would have taken her life."

And he dressed his grandmother in her Sunday clothes, borrowed a horse of his neighbour, harnessed it to a car, and put the old lady on the back seat, so that she could not fall out when he drove. And so they trundled through the wood. When the sun rose they were in front of an inn; there Little Claus pulled up, and went in to have some refreshment.

The host had very, very much money; he was also a very good man, but exceedingly hot, as if he had pepper and tobacco in him.

"Good morning," said he to Little Claus. "You've put on your Sundays clothes early to-day."

"Yes," answered Little Claus, "I am going to town with my old grandmother: she's sitting there on the car without. I can't bring her into the room—will you give her a glass of mead? But you must speak very loud, for she can't hear well."

"Yes, that I'll do," said the host. And he poured out a great glass of mead, and went out with it to the dead grandmother, who had been placed upright in the carriage.

"Here's a glass of mead from your grandson," quoth mine host. But the dead woman replied not a word, but sat quite still. "Don't you hear?" cried the host, as loud as he could, "here is a glass of mead from your grandson!"

Once more he called out the same thing, but as she persisted in not hearing him, he became angry at last, and threw the glass in her face, so that the mead ran down over her nose, and she tumbled backward into the car, for she had only been put upright, and not bound fast.

"Hallo!" cried Little Claus, running out at the door, and seizing the host by the breast; "you've killed my grandmother now! See, there's a big hole in her forehead."

"Oh, here's a misfortune!" cried the host, wringing his hands. "That all comes of my hot temper. Dear Little Claus, I'll give you a bushel of money, and have

your grandmother buried as if she were my own; only keep quiet, or I shall have my head cut off, and that would be so very disagreeable!"

So Little Claus again received a whole bushel of money, and the host buried the old grandmother as if she had been his own. And when Little Claus came home with all his money, he at once sent his boy to Great Claus to ask to borrow a bushel measure.

"What's that?" said Great Claus. "Have I not killed him? I must go myself and see to this." And so he went over himself with the bushel to Little Claus.

"Now, where did you get all that money from?" he asked; and he opened his eyes wide when he saw all that had been brought together.

"You killed my grandmother, and not me," replied Little Claus; "and I've been and sold her, and got a whole bushel of money for her."

"That's really being well paid," said Great Claus; and he hastened home, took an axe, and killed his own grandmother directly. Then he put her on a carriage, and drove off to the town with her, to where the apothecary lived, and asked him if he would buy a dead person.

"Who is it, and where did you get him from?" asked the apothecary.

"It's my grandmother," answered Great Claus. "I've killed her to get a bushel of money for her."

"Heaven save us!" cried the apothecary, "you're raving! Don't say such things, or you may lose your head." And he told him earnestly what a bad deed this was that he had done, and what a bad man he was, and that he must be punished. And Great Claus was so frightened that he jumped out of the surgery straight into his carriage, and whipped the horses, and drove

home. But the apothecary and all the people thought him mad, and so they let him drive whither he would.

"You shall pay for this!" said Great Claus, when he was out upon the high-road: "yes, you shall pay me for this, Little Claus!" And directly he got home he took the biggest sack he could find, and went over to Little Claus, and said, "Now, you've tricked me again! First I killed my horses and then my old grandmother! That's all your fault; but you shall never trick me any more." And he siezed Little Claus round the body, and thrust him into the sack, and took him upon his back, and called out to him, "Now I shall go off with you and drown you."

It was a long way that he had to travel before he came to the river, and Little Claus was not too light to carry. The road led him close to a church: the organ was playing, and the people were singing so beautifully! Then Great Claus put down his sack, with Little Claus in it, close to the church door, and thought it would be a very good thing to go in and hear a psalm before he went farther; for Little Claus could not get out, and all the people were in church; and so he went in.

"Ah, yes! yes!" sighed Little Claus in the sack. And he turned and twisted, but he found it impossible to loosen the cord. Then there came by an old drover with snow-white hair, and a great staff in his hand: he was driving a whole herd of cows and oxen before him, and they stumbled against the sack in which Little Claus was confined, so that it was overthrown.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Little Claus, "I'm so young yet, and am to go to heaven directly!"

"And I, poor fellow," said the drover, "am so old already, and can't get there yet!"

"Open the sack," cried Little Claus; "creep into it instead of me, and you will get to heaven directly."

"With all my heart," replied the drover; and he untied the sack, out of which Little Claus crept forth immediately.

"But will you look after the cattle?" said the old man; and he crept into the sack at once, whereupon Little Claus tied it up, and went his way with all the cows and oxen.

Soon afterward Great Claus came out of the church. He took the sack on his shoulders again, although it seemed to him as if the sack had become lighter; for the old drover was only half as heavy as Little Claus.

"How light he is to carry now! Yes, that is because I have heard a psalm."

So he went to the river, which was deep and broad, threw the sack with the old drover in it into the water, and called after him, thinking that it was Little Claus, "You lie there! Now you shan't trick me any more!"

Then he went home; but when he came to a place where there was a cross-road, he met Little Claus driving all his beasts.

"What's this?" cried Great Claus. "Have I not drowned you?"

"Yes," replied Little Claus, "you threw me into the river less than half an hour ago."

"But wherever did you get all those fine beasts from?" asked Great Claus.

"These beasts are sea-cattle," replied Little Claus. "I'll tell you the whole story—and thank you for drowning me, for now I'm at the top of the tree. I am really rich! How frightened I was when I lay huddled in the sack, and the wind whistled about my ears when

you threw me down from the bridge into the cold water! I sank to the bottom immediately; but I did not knock myself, for the most splendid soft grass grows down there. Upon that I fell; and immediately the sack was opened, and the loveliest maiden, with snow-white garments and a green wreath upon her wet hair, took me by the hand, and said, 'Are you come, Little Claus? Here you have some cattle to begin with. A mile farther along the road there is a whole herd more, which I will give to you.' And now I saw that the river formed a great highway for the people of the sea. Down in its bed they walked and drove directly from the sea, and straight into the land, to where the river ends. There it was so beautifully full of flowers and of the freshest grass; the fishes, which swam in the water, shot past my ears, just as here the birds in the air. What pretty people there were there, and what fine cattle pasturing on mounds and in ditches!"

"But why did you come up again to us directly?" asked Great Claus. "I should not have done that, if it is so beautiful down there."

"Why," replied Little Claus, "in that I just acted with good policy. You heard me tell you that the sea-maiden said, 'A mile farther along the road'—and by the road she meant the river, for she can't go anywhere else—'there is a whole herd of cattle for you.' But I know what bends the stream makes—sometimes this way, sometimes that; there's a long way to go round: no, the thing can be managed in a shorter way by coming here to the land, and driving across the fields towards the river again. In this manner I save myself almost half a mile, and get all the quicker to my sea-cattle!"

"Oh, you are a fortunate man!" said Great Claus. "Do you think I should get some sea-cattle too if I went down to the bottom of the river?"

"Yes, I think so," replied Little Claus. "But I cannot carry you in the sack as far as the river; you are too heavy for me! But if you will go there, and creep into the sack yourself, I will throw you in with a great deal of pleasure."

"Thanks!" said Great Claus; "but if I don't get any sea-cattle when I am down there, I shall beat you, you may be sure!"

"Oh, no; don't be so fierce!"

And so they went together to the river. When the beasts, which were thirsty, saw the stream, they ran as fast as they could to get at the water.

"See how they hurry!" cried Little Claus. "They are longing to get back to the bottom."

"Yes, but help me first!" said Great Claus, "or else you shall be beaten."

And so he crept into the great sack, which had been laid across the back of one of the oxen.

"Put a stone in, for I'm afraid I shan't sink else," said Great Claus.

"That can be done," replied Little Claus; and he put a big stone into the sack, tied the rope tightly, and pushed against it. *Plump!* There lay Great Claus in the river, and sank at once to the bottom.

"I'm afraid he won't find the cattle!" said Little Claus; and then he drove homeward with what he had.

THUMBELINA

THERE was once a woman who wished for a very little child; but she did not know where she should procure one. So she went to an old witch, and said:

"I do so very much wish for a little child! Can you not tell me where I can get one?"

"Oh! that could easily be managed," said the witch. "There you have a barleycorn: that is not of the kind which grows in the countryman's field, and which the chickens get to eat. Put that into a flower-pot, and you shall see what you shall see."

"Thank you," said the woman; and she gave the witch twelve shillings, for that is what it cost.

Then she went home and planted the barleycorn, and immediately there grew up a great handsome flower, which looked like a tulip; but the leaves were tightly closed, as though it were still a bud.

"That is a beautiful flower," said the woman; and she kissed its yellow and red leaves. But just as she kissed it the flower opened with a pop. It was a real tulip, as one could now see; but in the middle of the flower there sat upon the green velvet stamens a little maiden, delicate and graceful to behold. She was scarcely half a thumb's length in height, and therefore she was called Thumbelina.

A neat polished walnut-shell served Thumbelina for a cradle, blue violet-leaves were her mattresses, with a

rose-leaf for a coverlet. There she slept at night; but in the daytime she played upon the table, where the woman had put a plate with a wreath of flowers around it, whose stalks stood in water; on the water swam a great tulip-leaf, and on this the little maiden could sit, and row from one side of the plate to the other, with two white horsehairs for oars. That looked pretty indeed! She could also sing, and, indeed, so delicately and sweetly that the like had never been heard.

Once as she lay at night in her pretty bed, there came an old Toad creeping through the window, in which one pane was broken. The Toad was very ugly, big, and damp: it hopped straight down upon the table, where Thumbelina lay sleeping under the rose-leaf.

"That would be a handsome wife for my son," said the Toad; and she took the walnut-shell in which Thumbelina lay asleep, and hopped with it through the window down into the garden.

There ran a great broad brook; but the margin was swampy and soft, and here the Toad dwelt with her son. Ugh! he was ugly, and looked just like his mother. "Croak! croak! brek-kek-kex!" that was all he could say when he saw the graceful little maiden in the walnut-shell.

"Don't speak so loud, or she will wake," said the old Toad. "She might run away from us, for she is as light as a bit of swan's-down. We will put her out in the brook upon one of the broad water-lily leaves. That will be just like an island for her, she is so small and light. Then she can't get away, while we put the State room under the marsh in order, where you are to live and keep house together."

Out in the brook there grew many water-lilies with

broad green leaves, which looked as if they were floating on the water. The leaf which lay farthest out was also the greatest of all, and to that the old Toad swam out and laid the walnut-shell upon it with Thumbelina. The little tiny Thumbelina woke early in the morning, and when she saw where she was, she began to cry very bitterly; for there was water on every side of the great green leaf, and she could not get to land at all. The old Toad sat down in the marsh, decking out her room with rushes and yellow weed—it was to be made very pretty for the new daughter-in-law; then she swam out, with her ugly son, to the leaf on which Thumbelina was. They wanted to take her pretty bed, which was to be put in the bridal chamber before she went in there herself. The old Toad bowed low before her in the water, and said:

“Here is my son; he will be your husband, and you will live splendidly together in the marsh.”

“Croak! croak! brek-kek-kex!” was all the son could say.

Then they took the delicate little bed, and swam away with it; but Thumbelina sat all alone upon the green leaf and wept, for she did not like to live at the nasty Toad’s, and have her ugly son for a husband. The little fishes swimming in the water below had seen the Toad, and had also heard what she said; therefore they stretched forth their heads, for they wanted to see the little girl. So soon as they saw her they considered her so pretty that they felt very sorry she should have to go down to the ugly Toad. No, that must never be! They assembled together in the water around the green stalk which held the leaf on which the little maiden stood, and with their teeth they gnawed away the stalk, and

so the leaf swam down the stream; and away went Thumbelina far away, where the Toad could not get at her.

Thumbelina sailed by many cities, and the little birds which sat in the bushes saw her, and said, "What a lovely little girl!" The leaf swam away with her, farther and farther; so Thumbelina travelled out of the country.

A graceful little white butterfly always fluttered round her, and at last alighted on the leaf. Thumbelina pleased him, and she was very glad of this, for now the Toad could not reach them; and it was so beautiful where she was floating along—the sun shone upon the water, and the water glistened like the most splendid gold. She took her girdle and bound one end of it round the butterfly, fastening the other end of the ribbon to the leaf. The leaf now glided onward much faster, and Thumbelina too, for she stood upon the leaf.

There came a big Cockchafer flying up; and he saw her, and immediately clasped his claws round her slender waist, and flew with her up into the tree. The green leaf went swimming down the brook, and the butterfly with it; for he was fastened to the leaf, and could not get away from it.

Mercy! how frightened poor little Thumbelina was when the Cockchafer flew with her up into the tree! But especially she was sorry for the fine white butterfly whom she had bound fast to the leaf, for, if he could not free himself from it, he would be obliged to starve. The Cockchafer, however, did not trouble himself at all about this. He seated himself with her upon the biggest green leaf of the tree, gave her the sweet part of the flowers to eat, and declared that she was very pretty,

though she did not in the least resemble a cockchafer. Afterward came all the other cockchafers who lived in the tree to pay a visit: they looked at Thumbelina, and said:

"Why, she has not even more than two legs!—that has a wretched appearance."

"She has not any feelers!" cried another.

"Her waist is quite slender—fie! she looks like a human creature—how ugly she is!" said all the lady cockchafers.

And yet Thumbelina was very pretty. Even the Cockchafer who had carried her off saw that; but when all the others declared she was ugly, he believed it at last, and would not have her at all—she might go whither she liked. Then they flew down with her from the tree, and set her upon a daisy, and she wept, because she was so ugly that the cockchafers would have nothing to say to her; and yet she was the loveliest little being one could imagine, and as tender and delicate as a rose-leaf.

The whole summer through poor Thumbelina lived quite alone in the great wood. She wove herself a bed out of blades of grass, and hung it up under a shamrock, so that she was protected from the rain; she plucked the honey out of the flowers for food, and drank of the dew which stood every morning upon the leaves. Thus summer and autumn passed away; but now came winter, the cold long winter. All the birds who had sung so sweetly before her flew away; trees and flowers shed their leaves; the great shamrock under which she had lived shrivelled up, and there remained nothing of it but a yellow withered stalk; and she was dreadfully cold, for her clothes were torn, and she herself was so

frail and delicate—poor little Thumbelina! she was nearly frozen. It began to snow, and every snowflake that fell upon her was like a whole shovelful thrown upon one of us, for we are tall, and she was only an inch long. Then she wrapped herself in a dry leaf, and that tore in the middle, and would not warm her—she shivered with cold.

Close to the wood into which she had now come lay a great cornfield, but the corn was gone long ago; only the naked dry stubble stood up out of the frozen ground. This was just like a great forest for her to wander through; and, oh! how she trembled with cold. Then she arrived at the door of the Field Mouse. This mouse had a little hole under the stubble. There the Field Mouse lived, warm and comfortable, and had a whole roomful of corn—a glorious kitchen and larder. Poor Thumbelina stood at the door just like a poor beggar girl, and begged for a little bit of a barleycorn, for she had not had the smallest morsel to eat for the last two days.

“You poor little creature,” said the Field Mouse—for after all she was a good old Field Mouse—“come into my warm room and dine with me.”

As she was pleased with Thumbelina, she said, “If you like you may stay with me through the winter, but you must keep my room clean and neat, and tell me little stories, for I am very fond of those.”

And Thumbelina did as the kind old Field Mouse bade her, and had a very good time of it.

“Now we shall soon have a visitor,” said the Field Mouse. “My neighbour is in the habit of visiting me once a week. He is even better off than I am, has great

rooms, and a beautiful black velvety fur. If you could only get him for your husband you would be well provided for. You must tell him the prettiest stories you know."

But Thumbelina did not care about this; she thought nothing of the neighbour, for he was a Mole. He came and paid his visits in his black velvet coat. The Field Mouse told how rich and how learned he was, and how his house was more than twenty times larger than hers; that he had learning, but that he did not like the sun and beautiful flowers, for he had never seen them.

Thumbelina had to sing, and she sang "Cockchafer, fly away," and "When the Parson goes Afield." Then the Mole fell in love with her, because of her delicious voice; but he said nothing, for he was a sedate man.

A short time before, he had dug a long passage through the earth from his own house to theirs; and Thumbelina and the Field Mouse obtained leave to walk in this passage as much as they wished. But he begged them not to be afraid of the dead bird which was lying in the passage. It was an entire bird, with wings and a beak. It certainly must have died only a short time before, and was now buried just where the Mole had made his passage.

The Mole took a bit of decayed wood in his mouth, and it glimmered like fire in the dark; and then he went first and lighted them through the long dark passage. When they came where the dead bird lay, the Mole thrust up his broad nose against the ceiling, so that a great hole was made, through which the daylight could shine down. In the middle of the floor lay a dead Swallow, his beautiful wings pressed close against his sides,

and his head and feet drawn back under his feathers: the poor bird had certainly died of cold. Thumbelina was very sorry for this; she was very fond of all the little birds, who had sung and twittered so prettily before her through the summer; but the Mole gave him a push with his crooked legs, and said, "Now he doesn't pipe any more. It must be miserable to be born a little bird. I'm thankful that none of my children can be that: such a bird has nothing but his 'tweet-weet,' and has to starve in the winter!"

"Yes, you may well say that, as a clever man," observed the Field Mouse. "Of what use is all this 'tweet-weet' to a bird when the winter comes? He must starve and freeze. But they say that's very aristocratic."

Thumbelina said nothing; but when the two others turned their backs on the bird, she bent down, put the feathers aside which covered his head, and kissed him upon his closed eyes.

"Perhaps it was he who sang so prettily before me in the summer," she thought. "How much pleasure he gave me, the dear beautiful bird!"

The Mole now closed up the hole through which the daylight shone in, and accompanied the ladies home. But at night Thumbelina could not sleep at all; so she got up out of her bed, and wove a large beautiful carpet of hay, and carried it and spread it over the dead bird, and laid the thin stamens of flowers, soft as cotton, and which she had found in the Field Mouse's room, at the bird's sides, so that he might lie soft in the ground.

"Farewell, you pretty little bird!" said she. "Farewell! and thanks to you for your beautiful song in the summer, when all the trees were green, and the sun shone down warmly upon us." And then she laid the

bird's head upon her heart. But the bird was not dead; he was only lying there torpid with cold; and now he had been warmed, and came to life again.

In autumn all the swallows fly away to warm countries; but if one happens to be belated, it becomes so cold that it falls down as if dead, and lies where it fell, and then the cold snow covers it.

Thumbelina fairly trembled, she was so startled; for the bird was large, very large, compared with her, who was only an inch in height. But she took courage, laid the cotton closer round the poor bird, and brought a leaf that she had used as her own coverlet, and laid it over the bird's head.

The next night she crept out to him again—and now he was alive, but quite weak; he could only open his eyes for a moment, and look at Thumbelina, who stood before him with a bit of decayed wood in her hand, for she had not a lantern.

"I thank you, you pretty little child," said the sick Swallow; "I have been famously warmed. Soon I shall get my strength back again, and I shall be able to fly about in the warm sunshine."

"Oh," she said, "it is so cold without. It snows and freezes. Stay in your warm bed, and I will nurse you."

Then she brought the Swallow water in the petal of a flower; and the Swallow drank, and told her how he had torn one of his wings in a thorn bush, and thus had not been able to fly so fast as the other swallows, which had sped away, far away, to the warm countries. So at last he had fallen to the ground, but he could remember nothing more, and did not know at all how he had come where she had found him.

The whole winter the Swallow remained there, and

Thumbelina nursed and tended him heartily. Neither the Field Mouse nor the Mole heard anything about it, for they did not like the poor Swallow. So soon as the spring came, and the sun warmed the earth, the Swallow bade Thumbelina farewell, and she opened the hole which the Mole had made in the ceiling. The sun shone in upon them gloriously, and the Swallow asked if Thumbelina would go with him; she could sit upon his back, and they would fly away far into the green wood. But Thumbelina knew that the old Field Mouse would be grieved if she left her.

"No, I cannot!" said Thumbelina.

"Farewell, farewell, you good, pretty girl!" said the Swallow; and he flew out into the sunshine. Thumbelina looked after him, and the tears came into her eyes, for she was heartily and sincerely fond of the poor Swallow.

"Tweet-weet! tweet-weet!" sang the bird, and flew into the green forest. Thumbelina felt very sad. She did not get permission to go out into the warm sunshine. The corn which was sown in the field over the house of the Field Mouse grew up high into the air; it was quite a thick wood for the poor girl, who was only an inch in height.

"You are betrothed now, Thumbelina," said the Field Mouse. "My neighbour has proposed for you. What great fortune for a poor child like you! Now you must work at your outfit, woollen and linen clothes both; for you must lack nothing when you have become the Mole's wife."

Thumbelina had to turn the spindle, and the Mole hired four spiders to weave for her day and night. Every evening the Mole paid her a visit; and he was al-

ways saying that when the summer should draw to a close, the sun would not shine nearly so hot, for that now it burned the earth almost as hard as a stone. Yes, when the summer should have gone, then he would keep his wedding day with Thumbelina. But she was not glad at all, for she did not like the tiresome Mole. Every morning when the sun rose, and every evening when it went down, she crept out at the door; and when the wind blew the corn ears apart, so that she could see the blue sky, she thought how bright and beautiful it was out here, and wished heartily to see her dear Swallow again. But the Swallow did not come back; he had doubtless flown far away, in the fair green forest. When autumn came on, Thumbelina had all her outfit ready.

"In four weeks you shall celebrate your wedding," said the Field Mouse to her.

But Thumbelina wept, and declared she would not have the tiresome Mole.

"Nonsense," said the Field Mouse; "don't be obstinate, or I will bite you with my white teeth. He is a very fine man whom you will marry. The Queen herself has not such a black velvet fur; and his kitchen and cellar are full. Be thankful for your good fortune."

Now the wedding was to be held. The Mole had already come to fetch Thumbelina; she was to live with him, deep under the earth, and never to come out into the warm sunshine, for that he did not like. The poor little thing was very sorrowful; she was now to say farewell to the glorious sun, which, after all, she had been allowed by the Field Mouse to see from the threshold of the door.

"Farewell, thou bright sun!" she said, and stretched

out her arms toward it, and walked a little way forth from the house of the Field Mouse, for now the corn had been reaped, and only the dry stubble stood in the fields. "Farewell!" she repeated, twining her arms round a little red flower which still bloomed there. "Greet the little Swallow from me, if you see him again."

"Tweet-weet! tweet-weet!" a voice suddenly sounded over her head. She looked up; it was the little Swallow, who was just flying by. When he saw Thumbelina he was very glad; and Thumbelina told him how loath she was to have the ugly Mole for her husband, and that she was to live deep under the earth, where the sun never shone. And she could not refrain from weeping.

"The cold winter is coming now," said the Swallow; "I am going to fly far away into the warm countries. Will you come with me? You can sit upon my back, then we shall fly from the ugly Mole and his dark room—away, far away, over the mountains, to the warm countries, where the sun shines warmer than here, where it is always summer, and there are lovely flowers. Only fly with me, you dear little Thumbelina, you who saved my life when I lay frozen in the dark earthy passage."

"Yes, I will go with you!" said Thumbelina, and she seated herself on the bird's back, with her feet on his outspread wing, and bound her girdle fast to one of his strongest feathers; then the Swallow flew up into the air over forest and over sea, high up over the great mountains, where the snow always lies; and Thumbelina felt cold in the bleak air, but then she hid under the bird's warm feathers, and only put out her little head to admire all the beauties beneath her.

At last they came to the warm countries. There the

sun shone far brighter than here; the sky seemed twice as high; in ditches and on the hedges grew the most beautiful blue and green grapes; lemons and oranges hung in the woods; the air was fragrant with myrtles and balsams, and on the roads the loveliest children ran about, playing with the gay butterflies. But the Swallow flew still farther, and it became more and more beautiful. Under the glorious green trees by the blue lake stood a palace of dazzling white marble, from the olden time. Vines clustered around the lofty pillars; at the top were many swallows' nests, and in one of these the Swallow lived who carried Thumbelina.

"That is my house," said the Swallow; "but it is not right that you should live there. It is not yet properly arranged by a great deal, and you will not be content with it. Select for yourself one of the splendid flowers which grow down yonder, then I will put you into it, and you shall have everything as nice as you can wish."

"That is capital," cried she, and clapped her little hands.

A great marble pillar lay there, which had fallen to the ground and had been broken into three pieces; but between these pieces grew the most beautiful great white flowers. The Swallow flew down with Thumbelina, and set her upon one of the broad leaves. But what was the little maid's surprise? There sat a little man in the midst of the flower, as white and transparent as if he had been made of glass: he wore the neatest of gold crowns on his head, and the brightest wings on his shoulders; he himself was not bigger than Thumbelina. He was the angel of the flower. In each of the flowers dwelt such a little man or woman, but this one was king over them all.

"Heavens! how beautiful he is!" whispered Thumbelina to the Swallow.

The little Prince was very much frightened at the Swallow; for it was quite a gigantic bird to him, who was so small. But when he saw Thumbelina, he became very glad; she was the prettiest maiden he had ever seen. Therefore he took off his golden crown, and put it upon her, asked her name, and if she would be his wife, and then she should be Queen of all the flowers. Now this was truly a different kind of man to the son of the Toad, and the Mole with the black velvet fur. She therefore said, "Yes," to the charming Prince. And out of every flower came a lady or a lord, so pretty to behold that it was a delight: each one brought Thumbelina a present; but the best gift was a pair of beautiful wings which had belonged to a great white fly; these were fastened to Thumbelina's back, and now she could fly from flower to flower. Then there was much rejoicing; and the little Swallow sat above them in his nest, and was to sing the marriage song, which he accordingly did as well as he could; but yet in his heart he was sad, for he was so fond, oh! so fond of Thumbelina, and would have liked never to part from her.

"You shall not be called Thumbelina," said the Flower Angel to her; "that is an ugly name, and you are too fair for it—we will call you Maia."

"Farewell, farewell!" said the little Swallow, with a heavy heart; and he flew away again from the warm countries, far away back to Denmark. There he had a little nest over the window of the man who can tell fairy tales. Before him he sang, "Tweet-weet! tweet-weet!" and from him we have the whole story.

THE TRAVELLING COMPANION

POOOR John was in a great tribulation, for his father was very ill, and could not get well again. Except these two, there was no one at all in the little room: the lamp on the table was nearly extinguished, and it was quite late in the evening.

"You have been a good son, John," said the sick father. "Providence will help you through the world." And he looked at him with mild, earnest eyes, drew a deep breath, and died: it was just as if he slept. But John wept; for now he had no one in the world, neither father nor mother, neither sister nor brother. Poor John! He lay on his knees before the bed, kissed his dead father's hand, and shed very many bitter tears; but at last his eyes closed, and he went to sleep, lying with his head against the hard bedpost.

Then he dreamed a strange dream: he saw the sun and moon shine upon him, and he beheld his father again fresh and well, and he heard his father laugh as he had always laughed when he was very glad. A beautiful girl, with a golden crown upon her long shining hair, gave him her hand; and his father said, "Do you see what a bride you have gained? She is the most beautiful in the whole world!" Then he awoke, and all the splendour was gone. His father was lying dead and cold in the bed, and there was no one at all with them. Poor John!

In the next week the dead man was buried. The son

walked close behind the coffin, and could now no longer see the good father who had loved him so much. He heard how they threw the earth down upon the coffin, and stopped to see the last corner of it; but the next shovelful of earth hid even that; then he felt just as if his heart would burst into pieces, so sorrowful was he. Around him they were singing a psalm; those were sweet holy tones that arose, and the tears came into John's eyes; he wept, and that did him good in his sorrow. The sun shone magnificently on the green trees, just as if it would have said, "You may no longer be sorrowful, John! Do you see how beautiful the sky is? Your father is up there, and prays to the Father of all that it may be always well with you."

"I will always do right, too," said John, "then I shall go to heaven to my father; and what joy that will be when we see each other again! How much I shall then have to tell him! and he will show me so many things, and explain to me the glories of heaven, just as he taught me here on earth. Oh, how joyful that will be!"

He pictured that to himself so plainly that he smiled, while the tears were still rolling down his cheeks. The little birds sat up in the chestnut-trees, and twittered, "Tweet-weet! tweet-weet!" They were joyful and merry, though they had been at the burying; but they seemed to know that the dead man was now in heaven; that he had wings, far larger and more beautiful than theirs; that he was now happy, because he had been a good man upon earth, and they were glad of it. John saw how they flew from the green tree out into the world, and he felt inclined to fly too. But first he cut out a great cross of wood to put on his father's grave; and when he brought it there in the evening the grave

was decked with sand and flowers; strangers had done this, for they were all very fond of the good father who was now dead.

Early next morning John packed his little bundle, and put in his belt his whole inheritance, which consisted of fifty dollars and a few silver shillings; with this he intended to wander out into the world. But first he went to the churchyard, to his father's grave, to say a prayer and to bid him farewell.

Out in the field where he was walking all the flowers stood fresh and beautiful in the warm sunshine; and they nodded in the wind, just as if they would have said, "Welcome to the green wood! Is it not fine here?" But John turned back once more to look at the old church, in which he had been christened when he was a little child, and where he had been every Sunday with his father at the service, and had sung his psalm; then, high up in one of the openings of the tower, he saw the ringer standing in his little pointed red cap, shading his face with his bent arm, to keep the sun from shining in his eyes. John nodded a farewell to him, and the little ringer waved his red cap, laid his hand on his heart, and kissed his hand to John a great many times, to show that he wished the traveller well and hoped he would have a prosperous journey.

John thought what a number of fine things he would get to see in the great splendid world; and he went on farther—farther than he had ever been before. He did not know the places at all through which he came, nor the people whom he met. Now he was far away in a strange region.

The first night he was obliged to lie down on a haystack in the field to sleep, for he had no other bed. But

that was very nice, he thought; the king could not be better off. There was the whole field, with the brook, the haystack, and the blue sky above it; that was certainly a beautiful sleeping-room. The green grass with the little red and white flowers was the carpet; the elder-bushes and the wild rose hedges were garlands of flowers; and for a wash-stand basin he had the whole brook with the clear fresh water; and the rushes bowed before him and wished him "Good evening" and "Good morning." The moon was certainly a great night-lamp, high up under the blue ceiling, and that lamp would never set fire to the curtains with its light. John could sleep quite safely, and he did so, and never woke until the sun rose and all the little birds were singing around, "Good morning! good morning! Are you not up yet?"

The bells were ringing for church; it was Sunday. The people went to hear the preacher, and John followed them, and sang a psalm and heard God's word. It seemed to him just as if he was in his own church, where he had been christened and had sung psalms with his father.

Out in the churchyard were many graves, and on some of them the grass grew high. Then he thought of his father's grave, which would at last look like these, as he could not weed it and adorn it. So he sat down and plucked up the long grass, set up the wooden crosses which had fallen down, and put back in their places the wreaths which the wind had blown away from the graves; for he thought, "Perhaps some one will do the same to my father's grave, as I cannot do it."

Outside the churchyard gate stood an old beggar, leaning upon his crutch. John gave him the silver shill-

ings which he had, and then went away, happy and cheerful, into the wide world. Toward evening the weather became terribly bad. He made haste to get under shelter, but dark night soon came on; then at last he came to a little church, which stood quite solitary on a small hill.

"Here I will sit down in a corner," said he, and went in; "I am quite tired and require a little rest." Then he sat down, folded his hands, and said his evening prayer; and before he was aware of it he was asleep and dreaming, while it thundered and lightened without.

When he awoke it was midnight; but the bad weather had passed by, and the moon shone in upon him through the windows. In the midst of the church stood an open coffin with a dead man in it who had not yet been buried. John was not at all timid, for he had a good conscience; and he knew very well that the dead do not harm any one. The living, who do evil, are bad men. Two such living bad men stood close by the dead man, who had been placed here in the church till he should be buried. They had an evil design against him, and would not let him rest quietly in his coffin, but were going to throw him out before the church door—the poor dead man!

"Why will you do that?" asked John; "that is bad and wicked. Let him rest, for mercy's sake."

"Nonsense!" replied the bad men; "he has cheated us. He owed us money and could not pay it, and now he's dead into the bargain, and we shall not get a penny! So we mean to revenge ourselves famously: he shall lie like a dog outside the church door!"

"I have not more than fifty dollars," cried John,

"that is my whole inheritance; but I will gladly give it you, if you will honestly promise me to leave the poor dead man in peace. I shall manage to get on without the money; I have hearty strong limbs, and Heaven will always help me."

"Yes," said these ugly bad men, "if you will pay his debt we will do nothing to him, you may depend upon that!" And then they took the money he gave them, laughed aloud at his good nature, and went their way. But he laid the corpse out again in the coffin, and folded its hands, took leave of it, and went away contentedly through the great forest.

All around, wherever the moon could shine through between the trees, he saw the graceful little elves playing merrily. They did not let him disturb them; they knew that he was a good, innocent man; and it is only the bad people who never get to see the elves. Some of them were not larger than a finger's breadth, and had fastened up their long yellow hair with golden combs: they were rocking themselves, two and two, on the great dewdrops that lay on the leaves and on the high grass; sometimes the drop rolled away, and then they fell down between the long grass-stalks, and that occasioned much laughter and noise among the other little creatures. It was charming. They sang, and John recognized quite plainly the pretty songs which he had learned as a little boy. Great coloured spiders, with silver crowns on their heads, had to spin long hanging bridges and palaces from hedge to hedge; and as the tiny dewdrops fell on these they looked like gleaming glass in the moonlight. This continued until the sun rose. Then the little elves crept into the flower-buds, and the wind



AND SO THEY WENT ON TOGETHER

caught their bridges and palaces, which flew through the air in the shape of spiders' webs.

John had just come out of the wood, when a strong man's voice called out behind him, "Hallo, comrade! whither are you journeying?"

"Into the wide world!" he replied. "I have neither father nor mother, and am but a poor lad; but Providence will help me."

"I am going out into the wide world too," said the strange man: "shall we two keep one another company?"

"Yes, certainly," said John; and so they went on together. Soon they became very fond of each other, for they were both good men. But John saw that the stranger was much more clever than himself. He had travelled through almost the whole world, and knew how to tell of almost everything that existed.

The sun already stood high when they seated themselves under a great tree to eat their breakfast; and just then an old woman came up. Oh, she was very old, and walked quite bent, leaning upon a crutch-stick; upon her back she carried a bundle of firewood which she had collected in the forest. Her apron was untied, and John saw that three great stalks of fern and some willow twigs looked out from within it. When she was close to them, her foot slipped; she fell and gave a loud scream, for she had broken her leg, the poor old woman!

John directly proposed that they should carry the old woman home to her dwelling; but the stranger opened his knapsack, took out a little box, and said that he had a salve there which would immediately make her leg whole and strong, so that she could walk home herself,

as if she had never broken her leg at all. But for that he required that she should give him the three rods which she carried in her apron.

"That would be paying well!" said the old woman, and she nodded her head in a strange way. She did not like to give away the rods, but then it was not agreeable to lie there with a broken leg. So she gave him the wands; and as soon as he had only rubbed the ointment on her leg, the old mother arose, and walked much better than before—such was the power of this ointment. But then it was not to be bought at the chemist's.

"What do you want with the rods?" John asked his travelling companion.

"They are three capital fern brooms," replied he. "I like those very much, for I am a whimsical fellow."

And they went on a good way.

"See how the sky is becoming overcast," said John, pointing straight before them. "Those are terribly thick clouds."

"No," replied his travelling companion, "those are not clouds, they are mountains—the great glorious mountains, on which one gets quite up over the clouds, and into the free air. Believe me, it is delicious! To-morrow we shall certainly be far out into the world."

But that was not so near as it looked; they had to walk for a whole day before they came to the mountains, where the black woods grew straight up toward heaven, and there were stones almost as big as a whole town. It might certainly be hard work to get quite across them, and for that reason John and his comrade went into the inn to rest themselves well, and gather strength for the morrow's journey.

Down in the great common room in the inn many

guests were assembled, for a man was there exhibiting a puppet-show. He had just put up his little theatre, and the people were sitting round to see the play. Quite in front a fat butcher had taken his seat in the very best place; his great bulldog, who looked very much inclined to bite, sat at his side and made big eyes, as all the rest were doing.

Now the play began; and it was a very nice play, with a king and a queen in it; they sat upon a beautiful throne, and had gold crowns on their heads and long trains to their clothes, for their means admitted of that. The prettiest of wooden dolls with glass eyes and great moustaches stood at all the doors, and opened and shut them so that fresh air might come into the room. It was a very pleasant play, and not at all mournful. But—goodness knows what the big bulldog can have been thinking of!—just as the queen stood up and was walking across the boards, as the fat butcher did not hold him, he made a spring upon the stage, and seized the queen round her slender waist so that it cracked again. It was quite terrible!

The poor man who managed the play was very much frightened and quite sorrowful about his queen, for she was the daintiest little doll he possessed, and now the ugly bulldog had bitten off her head. But afterward, when the people went away, the stranger said that he would put her to rights again; and then he brought out his little box, and rubbed the doll with the ointment with which he had cured the old woman when she broke her leg. As soon as the doll had been rubbed, she was whole again; yes, she could even move all her limbs by herself; it was no longer necessary to pull her by her string. The doll was like a living person, only that she

could not speak. The man who had the little puppet-show was very glad, for now he had not to hold this doll any more. She could dance by herself, and none of the others could do that.

When night came on, and all the people in the inn had gone to bed, there was some one who sighed so fearfully, and went on doing it so long, that they all got up to see who this could be. The man who had shown the play went to his little theatre, for it was there that somebody was sighing. All the wooden dolls lay mixed together, the king and all his followers; and it was they who sighed so pitiously, and stared with their glass eyes; for they wished to be rubbed a little as the queen had been, so that they might be able to move by themselves. The queen at once sank on her knees, and stretched forth her beautiful crown, as if she begged, "Take this from me, but rub my husband and my courtiers!" Then the poor man, the proprietor of the little theatre and the dolls, could not refrain from weeping, for he was really sorry for them. He immediately promised the travelling companion that he would give him all the money he should receive the next evening for the representation if the latter would only anoint four or five of his dolls. But the comrade said he did not require anything at all but the sword the man wore by his side; and, on receiving this, he anointed six of the dolls, who immediately began to dance so gracefully that all the girls, the living human girls, fell a-dancing too. The coachman and the cook danced, the waiter and the chambermaid, and all the strangers, and the fire-shovel and tongs; but these latter fell down just as they made their first leaps. Yes, it was a merry night!

Next morning John went away from them all with his travelling companion, up on to the high mountains, and through the great pine woods. They came so high up that the church steeples under them looked at last like little blueberries among all the green; and they could see very far, many, many miles away, where they had never been. So much splendour in the lovely world John had never seen at one time before. And the sun shone warm in the fresh blue air, and among the mountain he could hear the huntsmen blowing their horns so gaily and sweetly that tears came into his eyes, and he could not help calling out, "How kind has Heaven been to us all, to give us all the splendour that is in this world!"

The travelling companion also stood there with folded hands, and looked over the forest and the towns into the warm sunshine. At the same time there arose lovely sounds over their heads: they looked up, and a great white swan was soaring in the air, and singing as they had never heard a bird sing till then. But the song became weaker and weaker; he bowed his head and sank quite slowly down at their feet, where he lay dead, the beautiful bird!

"Two such splendid wings," said the travelling companion, "so white and large, as those which this bird has, are worth money; I will take them with me. Do you see that it was good I got a sabre?"

And so, with one blow, he cut off both the wings of the dead swan, for he wanted to keep them.

They now travelled for many, many miles over the mountains, till at last they saw a great town before them with hundreds of towers, which glittered like silver in

the sun. In the midst of the town was a splendid marble palace, roofed with pure red gold. And there the King lived.

John and the travelling companion would not go into the town at once, but remained in the inn outside the town, that they might dress themselves; for they wished to look nice when they came out into the streets. The host told them that the King was a very good man, who never did harm to any one; but his daughter, yes, goodness preserve us! she was a bad Princess. She possessed beauty enough—no one could be so pretty and so charming as she was—but of what use was that? She was a wicked witch, through whose fault many gallant Princes had lost their lives. She had given permission to all men to seek her hand. Any one might come, be he Prince or beggar: it was all the same to her. He had only to guess three things she had just thought of, and about which she questioned him. If he could do that she would marry him, and he was to be King over the whole country when her father should die; but if he could not guess the three things, she caused him to be hanged or to have his head cut off! Her father, the old King, was very sorry about it; but he could not forbid her to be so wicked, because he had once said that he would have nothing to do with her lovers; she might do as she liked. Every time a Prince came, and was to guess to gain the Princess, he was unable to do it, and was hanged or lost his head. He had been warned in time, you see, and might have given over his wooing. The old King was so sorry for all this misery and woe, that he used to lie on his knees with all his soldiers for a whole day in every year, praying that the Princess might become good; but she would not, by any means.

The old women who drank brandy used to colour it quite black before they drank it, they were in such deep mourning—and they certainly could not do more.

“The ugly Princess!” said John; “she ought really to have the rod; that would do her good. If I were only the old King she should be punished!”

Then they heard the people outside shouting, “Hurrah!” The Princess came by; and she was really so beautiful that all the people forgot how wicked she was, and that is why they cried, “Hurrah!” Twelve beautiful virgins, all in white silk gowns, and each with a golden tulip in her hand, rode on coal-black steeds at her side. The Princess herself had a snow-white horse, decked with diamonds and rubies. Her riding-habit was all of cloth of gold, and the whip she held in her hand looked like a sunbeam; the golden crown on her head was just like little stars out of the sky, and her mantle was sewn together out of more than a thousand beautiful butterflies’ wings. In spite of this, she herself was much more lovely than all her clothes.

When John saw her, his face became as red as a drop of blood, and he could hardly utter a word. The Princess looked just like the beautiful lady with the golden crown, of whom he had dreamt on the night when his father died. He found her so enchanting that he could not help loving her greatly. It could not be true that she was a wicked witch, who caused people to be hanged or beheaded if they could not guess the riddles she put to them.

“Every one has permission to aspire to her hand, even the poorest beggar. I will really go to the castle, for I cannot help doing it!”

They all told him not to attempt it, for certainly he

would fare as all the rest had done. His travelling companion, too, tried to dissuade him; but John thought it would end well. He brushed his shoes and his coat, washed his face and his hands, combed his nice fair hair, and then went quite alone into the town and to the palace.

"Come in!" said the old King, when John knocked at the door.

John opened it, and the old King came toward him in a dressing-gown and embroidered slippers; he had the crown on his head, and the sceptre in one hand and the orb in the other. "Wait a little!" said he, and put the orb under his arm, so that he could reach out his hand to John. But as soon as he learned that his visitor was a suitor, he began to weep so violently that both the sceptre and the orb fell to the ground, and he was obliged to wipe his eyes with his dressing-gown. Poor old King!

"Give it up!" said he. "You will fare badly, as all the others have done. Well, you shall see!"

Then he led him out into the Princess's pleasure garden. There was a terrible sight! In every tree there hung three or four Kings' sons who had wooed the Princess, but had not been able to guess the riddles she proposed to them. Each time that the breeze blew all the skeletons rattled, so that the little birds were frightened, and never dared to come into the garden. All the flowers were tied up to human bones, and in the flower-pots skulls stood and grinned. That was certainly a strange garden for a Princess.

"Here you see it," said the old King. "It will chance to you as it has chanced to all these whom you see here;

therefore you had better give it up. You will really make me unhappy, for I take these things very much at heart."

John kissed the good old King's hand, and said it would go well, for he was quite enchanted with the beautiful Princess.

Then the Princess herself came riding into the courtyard, with all her ladies; and they went out to her and wished her good morning. She was beautiful to look at, and she gave John her hand. And he cared much more for her then than before—she could certainly not be a wicked witch, as the people asserted. Then they betook themselves too the hall, and the little pages waited upon him with preserves and gingerbread nuts. But the old King was quite sorrowful; he could not eat anything at all. Besides, gingerbread nuts were too hard for him.

It was settled that John should come to the palace again the next morning; then the judges and the whole council would be assembled, and would hear how he succeeded with his answers. If it went well, he should come twice more; but no one had yet come who had succeeded in guessing right the first time; and if he did not manage better than they he must die.

John was not at all anxious as to how he should fare. On the contrary, he was merry, thought only of the beautiful Princess, and felt quite certain that he should be helped; but *how* he did not know, and preferred not to think of it. He danced along on the road returning to the inn, where his travelling companion was waiting for him.

John could not leave off telling how polite the Prin-

cess had been to him, and how beautiful she was. He declared he already longed for the next day, when he was to go into the palace and try his luck in guessing.

But the travelling companion shook his head and was quite downcast. "I am so fond of you!" said he. "We might have been together a long time yet, and now I am to lose you already! You poor dear John! I should like to cry, but I will not disturb your merriment on the last evening, perhaps, we shall ever spend together. We will be merry, very merry! To-morrow, when you are gone, I can weep undisturbed."

All the people in the town had heard directly that a new suitor for the Princess had arrived; and there was great sorrow on that account. The theatre remained closed; the women who sold cakes tied bits of crape round their sugar men, and the King and the priests were on their knees in the churches. There was great lamentation; for John would not, they all thought, fare better than the other suitors had fared.

Toward evening the travelling companion mixed a great bowl of punch, and said to John, "Now we will be very merry, and drink to the health of the Princess." But when John had drunk two glasses, he became so sleepy that he found it impossible to keep his eyes open, and he sank into a deep sleep. The travelling companion lifted him very gently from his chair, and laid him in the bed; and when it grew to be dark night, he took the two great wings which he had cut off the swan, and bound them to his own shoulders. Then he put in his pocket the longest of the rods he had received from the old woman who had fallen and broken her leg; and he opened the window and flew away over the town, straight toward the palace, where he seated himself in

a corner under the window which looked into the bedroom of the Princess.

All was quiet in the whole town. Now the clock struck a quarter to twelve, the window was opened, and the Princess came out in a long white cloak, and with black wings, and flew away across the town to a great mountain. But the travelling companion made himself invisible, so that she could not see him at all, and flew behind her, and whipped the Princess with his rod, so that the blood almost came wherever he struck. Oh, that was a voyage through the air! The wind caught her cloak, so that it spread out on all sides like a great sail, and the moon shone through it.

"How it hails! how it hails!" said the Princess at every blow she got from the rod; and it served her right. At last she arrived at the mountain, and knocked there. There was a rolling like thunder, and the mountain opened, and the Princess went in. The travelling companion followed her, for no one could see him—he was invisible. They went through a great, long passage, where the walls shone in quite a peculiar way: there were more than a thousand gleaming spiders running up and down the walls and gleaming like fire. Then they came into a great hall built of silver and gold; flowers as big as sunflowers, red and blue, shone on the walls; but no one could pluck these flowers, for the stems were ugly poisonous snakes, and the flowers were streams of fire pouring out of their mouths. The whole ceiling was covered with shining glow-worms and sky-blue bats, flapping their thin wings. It looked quite terrific! In the middle of the floor was a throne, carried by four skeleton horses, with harness of fiery red spiders; the throne itself was of milk-white glass, and the cushions were lit-

tle black mice, biting each other's tails. Above it was a canopy of pink spider's web, trimmed with the prettiest little green flies, which gleamed like jewels. On the throne sat an old magician, with a crown on his ugly head and a sceptre in his hand. He kissed the Princess on the forehead, made her sit down beside him on the costly throne, and then the music began. Great black grasshoppers played on jews' harps, and the owl beat her wings upon her body, because she hadn't a drum. That was a strange concert! Little black goblins with a Jack-o'-lantern light on their caps danced about in the hall. But no one could see the travelling companion; he had placed himself just behind the throne, and heard and saw everything. The courtiers, who now came in, were very grand and noble; but he who could see it all knew very well what it all meant. They were nothing more than broomsticks with heads of cabbages on them, which the magician had animated by his power, and to whom he had given embroidered clothes. But that did not matter, for, you see, they were only wanted for show.

After there had been a little dancing, the Princess told the magician that she had a new suitor, and therefore she inquired of him what she should think of to ask the suitor when he should come to-morrow to the palace.

"Listen!" said the magician, "I will tell you that: you must choose something very easy, for then he won't think of it. Think of one of your shoes. That he will not guess. Let him have his head cut off: but don't forget, when you come to me to-morrow night, to bring me his eyes, for I'll eat them."

The Princess curtsied very low, and said she would

not forget the eyes. The magician opened the mountain, and she flew home again; but the travelling companion followed her, and beat her again so hard with the rod that she sighed quite deeply about the heavy hailstorm, and hurried as much as she could to get back into the bedroom through the open window. The travelling companion, for his part, flew back to the inn, where John was still asleep, took off his wings, and then lay down upon the bed, for he might well be tired.

It was quite early in the morning when John awoke. The travelling companion also got up, and said he had had a wonderful dream in the night, about the Princess and her shoe; and he therefore begged John to ask if the Princess had not thought about her shoe. For it was this he had heard from the magician in the mountain.

"I may just as well ask about that as about anything else," said John. "Perhaps it is quite right, what you have dreamed. But I will bid you farewell; for, if I guess wrong, I shall never see you more."

Then they embraced each other, and John went into the town and to the palace. The entire hall was filled with people: the judges sat in their arm-chairs and had eider-down pillows behind their heads, for they had a great deal to think about. The old King stood up, and wiped his eyes with a white pocket-handkerchief. Now the Princess came in. She was much more beautiful than yesterday, and bowed to all in a very affable manner; but to John she gave her hand, and said, "Good morning to you."

Now John was to guess what she had thought of. Oh, how lovingly she looked at him! But as soon as she heard the single word "shoe" pronounced, she became

as white as chalk in the face, and trembled all over. But that availed her nothing, for John had guessed right!

Wonderful! How glad the old King was! He threw a somersault beautiful to behold. And all the people clapped their hands in honour of him and of John, who had guessed right the first time!

The travelling companion was very glad too, when he heard how well matters had gone. But John felt very grateful; and he was sure he should receive help the second and third time, as he had been helped the first. The next day he was to guess again.

The evening passed just like that of yesterday. While John slept the travelling companion flew behind the Princess to the mountain, and beat her even harder than the time before, for now he had taken two rods. No one saw him, and he heard everything. The Princess was to think of her glove; and this again he told to John as if it had been a dream. Thus John could guess well, which caused great rejoicing in the palace. The whole court threw somersaults, just as they had seen the King do the first time; but the Princess lay on the sofa, and would not say a single word. Now, the question was, if John could guess properly the third time. If he succeeded, he was to have the beautiful Princess and inherit the whole kingdom after the old King's death. If he failed, he was to lose his life, and the magician would eat his beautiful blue eyes.

That evening John went early to bed, said his prayers, and went to sleep quite quickly. But the travelling companion bound his wings to his back and his sword by his side, and took all three rods with him, and so flew away to the palace.

It was a very dark night. The wind blew so hard that the tiles flew off from the roofs, and the trees in the garden where the skeletons hung bent like reeds before the storm. The lightning flashed out every minute, and the thunder rolled just as if it were one peal lasting the whole night. Now the window opened, and the Princess flew out. She was as pale as death; but she laughed at the bad weather, and declared it was not bad enough yet. And her white cloak fluttered in the wind like a great sail; but the travelling companion beat her with the three rods, so that the blood dripped upon the ground, and at last she could scarcely fly any farther. At length, however, she arrived at the mountain.

"It hails and blows dreadfully!" she said. "I have never been out in such weather."

"One may have too much of a good thing," said the magician. "I shall think of something of which he has never thought, or he must be a greater conjurer than I. But now we will be merry." And he took the Princess by the hands, and they danced about with all the little goblins and Jack-o'-lanterns that were in the room. The red spiders jumped just as merrily up and down the walls: it looked as if fiery flowers were spurting out. The owl played the drum, the crickets piped, and the black grasshoppers played on the jews' harps. It was a merry ball.

When they had danced long enough the Princess was obliged to go home, for she might be missed in the palace. The magician said he would accompany her, then they would have each other's company on the way.

Then they flew away into the bad weather, and the travelling companion broke his three rods across their backs. Never had the magician been out in such a hail-

storm. In front of the palace he said good-bye to the Princess, and whispered to her at the same time, "Think of my head." But the travelling companion heard it; and just at the moment when the Princess slipped through the window into her bedroom, and the magician was about to turn back, he seized him by his long beard, and with his sabre cut off the ugly conjurer's head just by the shoulders, so that the magician did not even see him. The body he threw out into the sea to the fishes; but the head he only dipped into the water, and then tied it in his silk handkerchief, took it with him into the inn, and then lay down to sleep.

Next morning he gave John the handkerchief, and told him not to untie it until the Princess asked him to tell her thoughts.

There were so many people in the great hall of the palace that they stood as close together as radishes bound together in a bundle. The council sat in the chairs with the soft pillows, and the old King had new clothes on; the golden crown and sceptre had been polished, and everything looked quite stately. But the Princess was very pale, and had a coal-black dress on, as if she were going to be buried.

"Of what have I thought?" she asked John. And he immediately untied the handkerchief, and was himself quite frightened when he saw the ugly magician's head. All present shuddered, for it was terrible to look upon; but the Princess sat just like a statue, and would not utter a single word. At length she stood up, and gave John her hand, for he had guessed well. She did not look at any one, only sighed aloud, and said, "Now you are my lord!—this evening we will hold our wedding."

"I like that!" cried the old King. "Thus I will have it."

All present cried, "Hurrah!" The soldiers' band played music in the streets, the bells rang, and the cake-women took off the black crape from their sugar dolls, for joy now reigned around; three oxen roasted whole, and stuffed with ducks and fowls, were placed in the middle of the market, that every one might cut himself a slice; the fountains ran with the best wine; and whoever bought a penny cake at a baker's got six biscuits into the bargain, and the biscuits had raisins in them.

In the evening the whole town was illuminated; the soldiers fired off the cannon, and the boys let off crackers; and there was eating and drinking, clinking of glasses, and dancing in the palace. All the noble gentlemen and pretty ladies danced with each other, and one could hear, a long distance off, how they sang:

Here are many pretty girls, who all love to dance;
See, they whirl like spinning-wheels, retire and advance.
Turn, my pretty maiden, do, till the sole falls from your shoe.

But still the Princess was a witch, and did not like John. That occurred to the travelling companion; and so he gave John three feathers out of the swan's wings, and a little bottle with a few drops in it, and told John that he must put a large tub of water before the Princess's bed; and when the Princess was about to get into bed, he should give her a little push, so that she should fall into the tub; and then he must dip her three times, after he had put in the feathers and poured in the drops; she would then lose her magic qualities, and love him very much.

John did all that the travelling companion had advised him to do. The Princess screamed out loudly while he dipped her in the tub, and struggled under his hands in the form of a great coal-black swan with fiery eyes. When she came up the second time above the water, the swan was white, with the exception of a black ring round her neck. John let the water close for the third time over the bird, and in the same moment it was again changed to the beautiful Princess. She was more beautiful even than before, and thanked him, with tears in her lovely eyes, that he had freed her from the magic spell.

The next morning the old King came with his whole court, and then there was great congratulation till late into the day. Last of all came the travelling companion; he had his staff in his hand and his knapsack on his back. John kissed him many times, and said he must not depart, he must remain with the friend of whose happiness he was the cause. But the travelling companion shook his head, and said mildly and kindly:

"No, now my time is up. I have only paid my debt. Do you remember the dead man whom the bad people wished to injure? You gave all you possessed in order that he might have rest in his grave. I am that man."

And in the same moment he vanished.

The wedding festivities lasted a whole month. John and the Princess loved each other truly, and the old King passed many pleasant days, and let their little children ride on his knees and play with his sceptre. And John afterward became King over the whole country.

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

MANY years ago there lived an Emperor, who cared so enormously for new clothes that he spent all his money upon them, that he might be very fine. He did not care about his soldiers, nor about the theatre, and only liked to drive out and show his new clothes. He had a coat for every hour of the day; and just as they say of a king, "He is in council," one always said of him, "The Emperor is in the wardrobe."

In the great city in which he lived it was always very merry; every day a number of strangers arrived there. One day two cheats came: they gave themselves out as weavers, and declared that they could weave the finest stuff any one could imagine. Not only were their colours and patterns, they said, uncommonly beautiful, but the clothes made of the stuff possessed the wonderful quality that they became invisible to any one who was unfit for the office he held, or was incorrigibly stupid.

"Those would be capital clothes!" thought the Emperor. "If I wore those, I should be able to find out what men in my empire are not fit for the places they have; I could distinguish the clever from the stupid. Yes, the stuff must be woven for me directly!"

And he gave the two cheats a great deal of cash in hand, that they might begin their work at once.

As for them, they put up two looms, and pretended to be working; but they had nothing at all on their looms.

They at once demanded the finest silk and the costliest gold; this they put into their own pockets, and worked at the empty looms till late into the night.

"I should like to know how far they have got on with the stuff," thought the Emperor. But he felt quite uncomfortable when he thought that those who were not fit for their offices could not see it. He believed, indeed, that he had nothing to fear for himself, but yet he preferred first to send some one else to see how matters stood. All the people in the whole city knew what peculiar power the stuff possessed, and all were anxious to see how bad or how stupid their neighbours were.

"I will send my honest old Minister to the weavers," thought the Emperor. "He can judge best how the stuff looks, for he has sense, and no one understands his office better than he."

Now the good old Minister went out into the hall where the two cheats sat working at the empty looms.

"Mercy preserve us!" thought the old Minister, and he opened his eyes wide. "I cannot see anything at all!" But he did not say this.

Both the cheats begged him to be kind enough to come nearer, and asked if he did not approve of the colours and the pattern. Then they pointed to the empty loom, and the poor old Minister went on opening his eyes; but he could see nothing, for there was nothing to see.

"Mercy!" thought he, "can I indeed be so stupid? I never thought that, not a soul must know it. Am I not fit for my office?—No, it will never do for me to tell that I could not see the stuff."

"Do you say nothing to it?" said one of the weavers.

"Oh, it is charming—quite charming!" answered the

old Minister, as he peered through his spectacles. "What a fine pattern, and what colours! Yes, I shall tell the Emperor that I am very much pleased with it."

"Well, we are glad of that," said both the weavers; and then they named the colours, and explained the strange pattern. The old Minister listened attentively, that he might be able to repeat it when the Emperor came. And he did so.

Now the cheats asked for more money, and more silk and gold, which they declared they wanted for weaving. They put all into their own pockets, and not a thread was put upon the loom; but they continued to work at the empty frames as before.

The Emperor soon sent again, dispatching another honest statesman, to see how the weaving was going on, and if the stuff would soon be ready. He fared just like the first: he looked and looked, but, as there was nothing to be seen but the empty looms, he could see nothing.

"Is not that a pretty piece of stuff?" asked the two cheats, and they displayed and explained the handsome pattern which was not there at all.

"I am not stupid!" thought the man; "it must be my good office, for which I am not fit. It is odd enough, but I must not let it be noticed." And so he praised the stuff which he did not see, and expressed his pleasure at the beautiful colours and the charming pattern. "Yes, it is enchanting," he said to the Emperor.

All the people in the town were talking of the gorgeous stuff. The Emperor wished to see it himself while it was still upon the loom. With a whole crowd of chosen men, among whom were also the two honest

statesmen who had already been there, he went to the two cunning cheats, who were now weaving with might and main without fibre or thread.

"Is that not splendid?" said the two old statesmen, who had already been there once. "Does not your Majesty remark the pattern and the colours?" And then they pointed to the empty loom, for they thought that others could see the stuff.

"What's this?" thought the Emperor. "I can see nothing at all! That is terrible. Am I stupid? Am I not fit to be Emperor? That would be the most dreadful thing that could happen to me.—Oh, it is *very* pretty!" he said aloud. "It has our exalted approbation." And he nodded in a contented way, and gazed at the empty loom, for he would not say that he saw nothing. The whole suite whom he had with him looked and looked, and saw nothing, any more than the rest; but, like the Emperor, they said, "That is pretty!" and counselled him to wear these splendid new clothes for the first time at the great procession that was presently to take place. "It is splendid, tasteful, excellent!" went from mouth to mouth. On all sides there seemed to be general rejoicing, and the Emperor gave the cheats the title of Imperial Court Weavers.

The whole night before the morning on which the procession was to take place the cheats were up, and had lighted more than sixteen candles. The people could see that they were hard at work, completing the Emperor's new clothes. They pretended to take the stuff down from the loom; they made cuts in the air with great scissors; they sewed with needles without thread; and at last they said, "Now the clothes are ready!"

The Emperor came himself with his noblest cavaliers;



THE KING WAS IN PROCESSION WITH
THE BISHOP.

and the two cheats lifted up one arm as if they were holding something, and said, "See, here are the trousers! Here is the coat! Here is the cloak!" and so on. "It is as light as a spider's web: one would think one had nothing on; but that is just the beauty of it."

"Yes," said all the cavaliers; but they could not see anything, for nothing was there.

"Does your Imperial Majesty please to condescend to undress?" said the cheats; "then we will put on you the new clothes here in front of the great mirror."

The Emperor took off his clothes, and the cheats pretended to put on him each new garment as it was ready; and the Emperor turned round and round before the mirror.

"Oh, how well they look! How capitally they fit!" said all. "What a pattern! What colours! That is a splendid dress!"

"They are standing outside with the canopy which is to be borne above your Majesty in the procession!" announced the head master of the ceremonies.

"Well, I am ready," replied the Emperor. "Does it not suit me well?" And then he turned again to the mirror, for he wanted it to appear as if he contemplated his adornment with great interest.

The chamberlains, who were to carry the train, stooped down with their hands toward the floor, just as if they were picking up the mantle; then they pretended to be holding something up in the air. They did not dare to let it be noticed that they saw nothing.

So the Emperor went in procession under the rich canopy, and every one in the streets said, "How incomparable are the Emperor's new clothes! What a train he has to his mantle! How it fits him!" No one would

let it be perceived that he could see nothing, for that would have shown that he was not fit for his office, or was very stupid. No clothes of the Emperor's had ever had such a success as these.

"But he has nothing on!" a little child cried out at last.

"Just hear what that innocent says!" said the father; and one whispered to another what the child had said.

"But he has nothing on!" said the whole people at length. That touched the Emperor, for it seemed to him that they were right; but he thought within himself, "I must go through with the procession." And the chamberlains held on tighter than ever, and carried the train which did not exist at all.

THE HARDY TIN SOLDIER

THERE were once five and twenty tin soldiers; they were all brothers, for they had all been born of one old tin spoon. They shouldered their muskets, and looked straight before them: their uniform was red and blue, and very splendid. The first thing they had heard in the world, when the lid was taken off their box, had been the words "Tin soldiers!" These words were uttered by a little boy, clapping his hands: the soldiers had been given to him, for it was his birthday; and now he put them upon the table. Each soldier was exactly like the rest; but one of them had been cast last of all, and there had not been enough tin to finish him; but he stood as firmly upon his one leg as the others on their two; and it was just this Soldier who became remarkable.

On the table on which they had been placed stood many other playthings, but the toy that attracted most attention was a neat castle of cardboard. Through the little windows one could see straight into the hall. Before the castle some little trees were placed round a little looking-glass, which was to represent a clear lake. Waxen swans swam on this lake, and were mirrored in it. This was all very pretty; but the prettiest of all was a little lady, who stood at the open door of the castle: she was also cut out in paper, but she had a dress of the clearest gauze, and a little narrow blue ribbon over her shoulders, that looked like a scarf; and in the

middle of this ribbon was a shining tinsel rose as big as her whole face. The little lady stretched out both her arms, for she was a dancer; and then she lifted one leg so high that the Tin Soldier could not see it at all, and thought that, like himself, she had but one leg.

"That would be the wife for me," thought he; "but she is very grand. She lives in a castle, and I have only a box, and there are five and twenty of us in that. It is no place for her. But I must try to make acquaintance with her."

And then he lay down at full length behind a snuff-box which was on the table; there he could easily watch the little dainty lady, who continued to stand on one leg without losing her balance.

When the evening came, all the other tin soldiers were put into their box, and the people in the house went to bed. Now the toys began to play at 'visiting,' and at 'war,' and 'giving balls.' The tin soldiers rattled in their box, for they wanted to join, but could not lift the lid. The nutcracker threw somersaults, and the pencil amused itself on the table: there was so much noise that the canary woke up, and began to speak too, and even in verse. The only two who did not stir from their places were the Tin Soldier and the dancing lady: she stood straight up on the point of one of her toes, and stretched out both her arms; and he was just as enduring on his one leg; and he never turned his eyes away from her.

Now the clock struck twelve—and, bounce!—the lid flew off the snuff-box; but there was not snuff in it, but a little Goblin: you see it was a trick.

"Tin Soldier!" said the Goblin, "don't stare at things that don't concern you."

But the Tin Soldier pretended not to hear him.

"Just you wait till to-morrow!" said the Goblin.

But when the morning came, and the children got up, the Tin Soldier was placed in the window; and whether it was the Goblin or the draught that did it, all at once the window flew open, and the Soldier fell head over heels out of the third story. That was a terrible passage! He put his leg straight up, and stuck with his helmet downward and his bayonet between the paving-stones.

The servant-maid and the little boy came down directly to look for him, but though they almost trod upon him they could not see him. If the Soldier had cried out, "Here I am!" they would have found him; but he did not think it fitting to call out loudly, because he was in uniform.

Now it began to rain; the drops soon fell thicker, and at last it came down in a complete stream. When the rain was past, two street boys came by.

"Just look!" said one of them, "there lies a tin soldier. He must come out and ride in the boat."

And they made a boat out of a newspaper, and put the Tin Soldier in the middle of it; and so he sailed down the gutter, and the two boys ran beside him and clapped their hands. Goodness preserve us! how the waves rose in that gutter, and how fast the stream ran! But then it had been a heavy rain. The paper boat rocked up and down, and sometimes turned round so rapidly that the Tin Soldier trembled; but he remained firm, and never changed countenance, and looked straight before him, and shouldered his musket.

All at once the boat went into a long drain, and it became as dark as if he had been in his box.

"Where am I going now?" he thought. "Yes, yes, that's the Goblin's fault. Ah! if the little lady only sat here with me in the boat, it might be twice as dark for what I should care."

Suddenly there came a great Water Rat, which lived under the drain.

"Have you a passport?" said the Rat. "Give me your passport."

But the Tin Soldier kept silence, and held his musket tighter than ever.

The boat went on, but the Rat came after it. Hu! how he gnashed his teeth, and called out to the bits of straw and wood:

"Hold him! hold him! he hasn't paid toll—he hasn't shown his passport!"

But the stream became stronger and stronger. The Tin Soldier could see the bright daylight where the arch ended; but he heard a roaring noise, which might well frighten a bolder man. Only think—just where the tunnel ended, the drain ran into a great canal; and for him that would have been as dangerous as for us to be carried down a great waterfall.

Now he was already so near it that he could not stop. The boat was carried out, the poor Tin Soldier stiffening himself as much as he could, and no one could say that he moved an eyelid. The boat whirled round three or four times, and was full of water to the very edge—it must sink. The Tin Soldier stood up to his neck in water, and the boat sank deeper and deeper, and the paper was loosened more and more; and now the water closed over the Soldier's head. Then he thought of the pretty little dancer, and how he should never see her again; and it sounded in the soldier's ears:

Farewell, farewell, thou warrior brave,
For this day thou must die!

And now the paper parted, and the Tin Soldier fell out; but at that moment he was snapped up by a great fish.

Oh, how dark it was in that fish's body! It was darker yet than in the drain tunnel; and then it was very narrow too. But the Tin Soldier remained unmoved, and lay at full length shouldering his musket.

The fish swam to and fro; he made the most wonderful movements, and then became quite still. At last something flashed through him like lightning. The daylight shone quite clear, and a voice said aloud, "The Tin Soldier!" The fish had been caught, carried to market, bought, and taken into the kitchen, where the cook cut him open with a large knife. She seized the Soldier round the body with both her hands, and carried him into the room, where all were anxious to see the remarkable man who had travelled about in the inside of a fish; but the Tin Soldier was not at all proud. They placed him on the table, and there—no! What curious things may happen in the world! The Tin Soldier was in the very room in which he had been before! He saw the same children, and the same toys stood on the table; and there was the pretty castle with the graceful little dancer. She was still balancing herself on one leg, and held the other extended in the air. She was hardy too. That moved the Tin Soldier: he was very nearly weeping tin tears, but that would not have been proper. He looked at her, but they said nothing to each other.

Then one of the little boys took the Tin Soldier and flung him into the stove. He gave no reason for doing

this. It must have been the fault of the Goblin in the snuff-box.

The Tin Soldier stood there quite illuminated, and felt a heat that was terrible; but whether this heat proceeded from the real fire or from love he did not know. The colours had quite gone off from him; but whether that had happened on the journey, or had been caused by grief, no one could say. He looked at the little lady, she looked at him, and he felt that he was melting; but he still stood firm, shouldering his musket. Then suddenly the door flew open, and the draught of air caught the dancer, and she flew like a sylph just into the stove to the Tin Soldier, and flashed up in a flame, and she was gone. Then the Tin Soldier melted down into a lump, and when the servant-maid took the ashes out next day, she found him in the shape of a little tin heart. But of the dancer nothing remained but the tinsel rose, and that was burned as black as a coal.

WHAT THE OLD MAN DOES IS ALWAYS RIGHT

I WILL tell you the story which was told to me when I was a little boy. Every time I thought of the story, it seemed to me to become more and more charming; for it is with stories as it is with many people—they become better as they grow older.

I take it for granted that you have been in the country, and seen a very old farmhouse with a thatched roof, and mosses and small plants growing wild upon the thatch. There is a stork's nest on the summit of the gable; for we can't do without the stork. The walls of the house are sloping, and the windows are low, and only one of the latter is made so that it will open. The baking-oven sticks out of the wall like a little fat body. The elder-tree hangs over the paling, and beneath its branches, at the foot of the paling, is a pool of water in which a few ducks are disporting themselves. There is a yard dog too, who barks at all comers.

Just such a farmhouse stood out in the country; and in this house dwelt an old couple—a peasant and his wife. Small as was their property, there was one article among it that they could do without—a horse, which made a living out of the grass it found by the side of the high-road. The old peasant rode into the town on this horse; and often his neighbours borrowed it of him, and rendered the old couple some service in return for the loan of it. But they thought it would be best if they

sold the horse, or exchanged it for something that might be more useful to them. But what might this *something* be?

"You'll know that best, old man," said the wife. "It is fair-day to-day, so ride into town, and get rid of the horse for money, or make a good exchange: whichever you do will be right to me. Ride off to the fair."

And she fastened his neckerchief for him, for she could do that better than he could; and she tied it in a double bow, for she could do that very prettily. Then she brushed his hat round and round with the palm of her hand, and gave him a kiss. So he rode away upon the horse that was to be sold or to be bartered for something else. Yes, the old man knew what he was about.

The sun shone hotly down, and not a cloud was to be seen in the sky. The road was very dusty, for many people who were all bound for the fair were driving, or riding, or walking upon it. There was no shelter anywhere from the sunbeams.

Among the rest, a man was trudging along, and driving a cow to the fair. The cow was as beautiful a creature as any cow can be.

"She gives good milk, I'm sure," said the peasant. "That would be a very good exchange—the cow for the horse.

"Hallo, you there with the cow!" he said; "I tell you what—I fancy a horse costs more than a cow, but I don't care for that; a cow would be more useful to me. If you like, we'll exchange."

"To be sure I will," said the man; and they exchanged accordingly.

So that was settled, and the peasant might have turned back, for he had done the business he came to

do; but as he had once made up his mind to go to the fair, he determined to proceed, merely to have a look at it; and so he went on to the town with his cow.

Leading the animal, he strode sturdily on; and after a short time he overtook a man who was driving a sheep. It was a good fat sheep, with a fine fleece on its back.

"I should like to have that fellow," said our peasant to himself. "He would find plenty of grass by our palings, and in the winter we could keep him in the room with us. Perhaps it would be more practical to have a sheep instead of a cow. Shall we exchange?"

The man with the sheep was quite ready, and the bargain was struck. So our peasant went on in the high-road with his sheep.

Soon he overtook another man, who came into the road from a field, carrying a great goose under his arm.

"That's a heavy thing you have there. It has plenty of feathers and plenty of fat, and would look well tied to a string, and paddling in the water at our place. That would be something for my old woman; she could make all kinds of profit out of it. How often she has said, 'If we only had a goose!' Now, perhaps, she can have one; and, if possible, it shall be hers. Shall we exchange? I'll give you my sheep for your goose, and thank you into the bargain."

The other man had not the least objection; and accordingly they exchanged, and our peasant became the proprietor of the goose.

By this time he was very near the town. The crowd on the high-road became greater and greater; there was quite a crush of men and cattle. They walked in the road, and close by the palings; and at the barrier they

even walked into the toll-man's potato-field, where his own fowl was strutting about with a string to its leg, lest it should take fright at the crowd, and stray away, and so be lost. This fowl had short tail-feathers, and winked with both its eyes, and looked very cunning. "Cluck, cluck!" said the fowl. What it thought when it said this I cannot tell you; but directly our good man saw it, he thought, "That's the finest fowl I've ever seen in my life! Why, it's finer than our parson's brood hen. On my word, I should like to have that fowl. A fowl can always find a grain or two, and can almost keep itself. I think it would be a good exchange if I could get that for my goose.

"Shall we exchange?" he asked the toll-taker.

"Exchange!" repeated the man; "well, that would not be a bad thing."

And so they exchanged; the toll-taker at the barrier kept the goose, and the peasant carried away the fowl.

Now he had done a good deal of business on his way to the fair, and he was hot and tired. He wanted something to eat, and a glass of brandy to drink; and soon he was in front of the inn. He was just about to step in, when the ostler came out, so they met at the door. The ostler was carrying a sack.

"What have you in that sack?" asked the peasant.

"Rotten apples," answered the ostler; "a whole sackful of them—enough to feed the pigs with."

"Why, that's terrible waste! I should like to take them to my old woman at home. Last year the old tree by the turf-hole only bore a single apple, and we kept it in the cupboard till it was quite rotten and spoiled. 'It was always property,' my old woman said; but here

she could see a quantity of property—a whole sackful. Yes, I shall be glad to show them to her.”

“What will you give me for the sackful?” asked the ostler.

“What will I give? I will give my fowl in exchange.”

And he gave the fowl accordingly, and received the apples, which he carried into the guest-room. He leaned the sack carefully by the stove, and then went to the table. But the stove was hot: he had not thought of that. Many guests were present—horse-dealers, ox-herds, and two Englishmen—and the two Englishmen were so rich that their pockets bulged out with gold coins, and almost burst; and they could bet too, as you shall hear.

“Hiss-s-s! hiss-s-s! What was that by the stove? The apples were beginning to roast!

“What is that?”

“Why, do you know—” said our peasant.

And he told the whole story of the horse that he had changed for a cow, and all the rest of it, down to the apples.

“Well, your old woman will give it you well when you get home!” said one of the two Englishmen. “There will be a disturbance.”

“What?—give me what?” said the peasant. “She will kiss me, and say, ‘What the old man does is always right.’”

“Shall we wager?” said the Englishman. “We’ll wager coined gold by the ton—a hundred pounds to the hundredweight!”

“A bushel will be enough,” replied the peasant. “I can only set the bushel of apples against it; and I’ll

throw myself and my old woman into the bargain—and I fancy that's piling up the measure."

"Done—taken!"

And the bet was made. The host's carriage came up, and the Englishmen got in, and the peasant got in; away they went, and soon they stopped before the peasant's farm.

"Good evening, old woman."

"Good evening, old man."

"I've made the exchange."

"Yes, you understand what you're about," said the woman.

And she embraced him, and paid no attention to the stranger guests, nor did she notice the sack.

"I got a cow in exchange for the horse," said he.

"Heaven be thanked!" said she. "What glorious milk we shall now have, and butter and cheese on the table! That was a most capital exchange!"

"Yes, but I changed the cow for a sheep."

"Ah, that's better still!" cried the wife. "You always think of everything: we have just pasture enough for a sheep. Ewe's-milk and cheese, and woollen jackets and stockings! The cow cannot give those, and her hairs will only come off. How you think of everything!"

"But I changed away the sheep for a goose."

"Then this year we shall really have roast goose to eat, my dear old man. You are always thinking of something to give me pleasure. How charming that is! We can let the goose walk about with a string to her leg, and she'll grow fatter still before we roast her."

"But I gave away the goose for a fowl," said the man.

"A fowl? That *was* a good exchange!" replied the woman. "The fowl will lay eggs and hatch them, and we shall have chickens: we shall have a whole poultry-yard! Oh, that's just what I was wishing for."

"Yes, but I exchanged the fowl for a sack of shrivelled apples."

"What!—I must positively kiss you for that," exclaimed the wife. "My dear, good husband! Now I'll tell you something. Do you know, you had hardly left me this morning before I began thinking how I could give you something very nice this evening. I thought it should be pancakes with savoury herbs. I had eggs, and bacon too; but I wanted herbs. So I went over to the schoolmaster's—they have herbs there, I know—but the schoolmistress is a mean woman, though she looks so sweet. I begged her to lend me a handful of herbs. 'Lend!' she answered me; 'nothing at all grows in our garden, not even a shrivelled apple. I could not even lend you a shrivelled apple, my dear woman.' But now I can lend *her* ten, or a whole sackful. That I'm very glad of; that makes me laugh!" And with that she gave him a sounding kiss.

"I like that!" exclaimed both the Englishmen together. "Always going downhill, and always merry; that's worth the money."

So they paid a hundredweight of gold to the peasant, who was not scolded, but kissed.

Yes, it always pays, when the wife sees and always asserts that her husband knows best, and that whatever he does is right.

You see, that is my story. I heard it when I was a child; and now you have heard it too, and know that "What the old man does is always right."

THE STORKS

ON the last house in a little village stood a Stork's nest. The Mother-Stork sat in it with her four young ones, who stretched out their heads with the pointed black beaks, for their beaks had not yet turned red. A little way off stood the Father-Stork, all alone on the ridge of the roof, quite upright and stiff; he had drawn up one of his legs, so as not to be quite idle while he stood sentry. One would have thought he had been carved out of wood, so still did he stand. He thought, "It must look very grand, that my wife has a sentry standing by her nest. They can't tell that it is her husband. They certainly think I have been commanded to stand here. That looks so aristocratic!" And he went on standing on one leg.

Below in the street a whole crowd of children were playing; and when they caught sight of the Storks, one of the boldest of the boys, and afterward all of them, sang the old verse about the Storks. But they only sang it just as he could remember it:

Stork, stork, fly away;
Stand not on one leg to-day.
Thy dear wife is in the nest,
Where she rocks her young to rest.

The first he will be hanged,
The second will be hit,
The third he will be shot,
And the fourth put on the spit.

"Just hear what those boys are saying!" said the little Stork-children. "They say we're to be hanged and killed."

"You're not to care for that!" said the Mother-Stork. "Don't listen to it, and then it won't matter."

But the boys went on singing, and pointed at the Storks mockingly with their fingers; only one boy, whose name was Peter, declared that it was a sin to make a jest of animals, and he would not join in it at all.

The Mother-Stork comforted her children. "Don't you mind it at all," she said; "see how quiet your father stands, though it's only on one leg."

"We are very much afraid," said the young Storks: and they drew their heads far back into the nest.

Now to-day, when the children came out again to play, and saw the Storks, they sang their song:

The first he will be hanged,
The second will be hit . . .

"Shall we be hanged and beaten?" asked the young Storks.

"No, certainly not," replied the mother. "You shall learn to fly; I'll exercise you; then we shall fly out into the meadows and pay a visit to the frogs; they will bow before us in the water, and sing 'Co-ax! co-ax!' and then we shall eat them up. That will be a real pleasure."

"And what then?" asked the young Storks.

"Then all the Storks will assemble, all that are here in the whole country, and the autumn exercises begin: then one must fly well, for that is highly important, for whoever cannot fly properly will be thrust dead by the

general's beak; so take care and learn well when the exercising begins."

"But then we shall be killed, as the boys say—and only listen, now they're singing again."

"Listen to me, and not to them," said the Mother-Stork. "After the great review we shall fly away to the warm countries, far away from here, over mountains and forests. We shall fly to Egypt, where there are three covered houses of stone, which curl in a point and tower above the clouds; they are called pyramids, and are older than a stork can imagine. There is a river in that country which runs out of its bed, and then all the land is turned to mud. One walks about in the mud, and eats frogs."

"Oh!" cried all the young ones.

"Yes! It is glorious there! One does nothing all day long but eat; and while we are so comfortable over there, here there is not a green leaf on the trees; here it is so cold that the clouds freeze to pieces, and fall down in little white rags!"

It was the snow that she meant, but she could not explain it in any other way.

"And do the naughty boys freeze to pieces?" asked the young Storks.

"No, they do not freeze to pieces; but they are not far from it, and must sit in the dark room and cower. You, on the other hand, can fly about in foreign lands, where there are flowers, and the sun shines warm."

Now some time had elapsed, and the nestlings had grown so large that they could stand upright in the nest and look far around; and the Father-Stork came every day with delicious frogs, little snakes, and all kinds of

stork-dainties as he found them. Oh! it looked funny when he performed feats before them! He laid his head quite back upon his tail, and clapped with his beak as if he had been a little clapper; and then he told them stories, all about the marshes.

"Listen! now you must learn to fly," said the Mother-Stork one day; and all the four young ones had to go out on the ridge of the roof. Oh, how they tottered! how they balanced themselves with their wings, and yet they were nearly falling down.

"Only look at me," said the mother. "Thus you must hold your heads! Thus you must pitch your feet! One, two! one, two! That's what will help you on in the world."

Then she flew a little way, and the young ones made a little clumsy leap. Bump!—there they lay, for their bodies were too heavy.

"I will not fly!" said one of the young Storks, and crept back into the nest; "I don't care about getting to the warm countries."

"Do you want to freeze to death here, when the winter comes? Are the boys to come and hang you, and singe you, and roast you? Now I'll call them."

"Oh, no!" cried the young Stork, and hopped out on to the roof again like the rest.

On the third day they could actually fly a little, and then they thought they could also soar and hover in the air. They tried it, but—bump!—down they tumbled, and they had to shoot their wings again quickly enough. Now the boys came into the street again, and sang their song:

Stork, stork, fly away!

"Shall we fly down and pick their eyes out?" asked the young Storks.

"No," replied the mother, "let them alone. Only listen to me, that's far more important. One, two, three!—now we fly round to the right. One, two, three!—now to the left round the chimney! See, that was very good! the last kick with the feet was so neat and correct that you shall have permission to-morrow to fly with me to the marsh! Several nice stork families go there with their young: show them that mine are the nicest, and that you can start proudly; that looks well, and will get you consideration."

"But are we not to take revenge on the rude boys?" asked the young Storks.

"Let them scream as much as they like. You will fly up to the clouds, and get to the land of the pyramids, when they will have to shiver, and not have a green leaf or a sweet apple."

"Yes, we will revenge ourselves!" they whispered to one another; and then the exercising went on.

Among all the boys down in the street, the one most bent upon singing the teasing song was he who had begun it, and he was quite a little boy. He could hardly be more than six years old. The young Storks certainly thought he was a hundred, for he was much bigger than their mother and father; and how should they know how old children and grown-up people can be? Their revenge was to come upon this boy, for it was he who had begun, and he always kept on. The young Storks were very angry; and as they grew bigger they were less inclined to bear it: at last their mother had to promise them that they should be revenged, but not till the last day of their stay.

"We must first see how you behave at the grand review. If you get through badly, so that the general stabs you through the chest with his beak, the boys will be right, at least in one way. Let us see."

"Yes, you shall see!" cried the young Storks; and then they took all imaginable pains. They practised every day, and flew so neatly and so lightly that it was a pleasure to see them.

Now the autumn came on; all the Storks began to assemble, to fly away to the warm countries while it is winter here. That *was* a review. They had to fly over forests and villages, to show how well they could soar, for it was a long journey they had before them. The young Storks did their part so well that they got a mark, "Remarkably well, with frogs and snakes." That was the highest mark; and they might eat the frogs and snakes; and that is what they did.

"Now we will be revenged!" they said.

"Yes, certainly!" said the Mother-Stork. "What I have thought of will be the best. I know the pond in which all the little mortals lie till the stork comes and brings them to their parents. The pretty little babies lie there and dream so sweetly as they never dream afterward. All parents are glad to have such a child, and all children want to have a sister or a brother. Now we will fly to the pond, and bring one for each of the children who have not sung the naughty song and laughed at the Storks."

"But he who began to sing—that naughty, ugly boy!" screamed the young Storks; "what shall we do with him?"

"There is a little dead child in the pond, one that has dreained itself to death; we will bring that for him.

Then he will cry because we have brought him a little dead brother. But that good boy—you have not forgotten him, the one who said, 'It is wrong to laugh at animals!' for him we will bring a brother and a sister too. And as his name is Peter, all of you shall be called Peter too."

And it was done as she said; all the Storks were named Peter, and so they are all called even now.

THE UGLY DUCKLING

IT was glorious out in the country. It was summer, and the cornfields were yellow, and the oats were green; the hay had been put up in stacks in the green meadows, and the stork went about on his long red legs, and chattered Egyptian, for this was the language he had learned from his good mother. All around the fields and meadows were great forests, and in the midst of these forests lay deep lakes. Yes, it was really glorious out in the country. In the midst of the sunshine there lay an old farm, surrounded by deep canals, and from the wall down to the water grew great burdocks, so high that little children could stand upright under the loftiest of them. It was just as wild there as in the deepest wood. Here sat a Duck upon her nest, for she had to hatch her young ones; but she was almost tired out before the little ones came; and then she so seldom had visitors. The other ducks liked better to swim about in the canals than to run up to sit down under a burdock, and cackle with her.

At last one egg-shell after another burst open. "Piep! piep!" it cried, and in all the eggs there were little creatures that stuck out their heads.

"Rap! rap!" they said; and they all came rapping out as fast as they could, looking all round them under the green leaves; and the mother let them look as much as they chose, for green is good for the eyes.

"How wide the world is!" said the young ones, for

they certainly had much more room now than when they were in the eggs.

"Do you think this is all the world?" asked the mother. "That extends far across the other side of the garden, quite into the parson's field, but I have never been there yet. I hope you are all together," she continued, and stood up. "No, I have not all. The largest egg still lies there. How long is that to last? I am really tired of it." And she sat down again.

"Well, how goes it?" asked an old Duck who had come to pay her a visit.

"It lasts a long time with that one egg," said the Duck who sat there. "It will not burst. Now, only look at the others; are they not the prettiest ducks one could possibly see? They are all like their father: the bad fellow never comes to see me."

"Let me see the egg which will not burst," said the old visitor. "Believe me, it is a turkey's egg. I was once cheated in that way, and had much anxiety and trouble with the young ones, for they are afraid of the water. I could not get them to venture in. I quacked and clucked, but it was no use. Let me see the egg. Yes, that's a turkey's egg! Let it lie there, and teach the other children to swim."

"I think I will sit on it a little longer," said the Duck. "I've sat so long now that I can sit a few days more."

"Just as you please," said the old Duck; and she went away.

At last the great egg burst. "Piep! piep!" said the little one, and crept forth. It was very large and very ugly. The Duck looked at it.

"It's a very large duckling," said she; "none of the others look like that: can it really be a turkey chick?"

Now we shall soon find it out. It must go into the water, even if I have to thrust it in myself."

The next day the weather was splendidly bright, and the sun shone on all the green trees. The Mother-Duck went down to the water with all her little ones. Splash she jumped into the water. "Quack! quack!" she said, and one duckling after another plunged in. The water closed over their heads, but they came up in an instant, and swam capitably; their legs went of themselves, and there they were all in the water. The ugly grey Duckling swam with them.

"No, it's not a turkey," said she; "look how well it can use its legs, and how upright it holds itself. It is my own child! On the whole it's quite pretty, if one looks at it rightly. Quack! quack! come with me, and I'll lead you out into the great world, and present you in the poultry-yard; but keep close to me, so that no one may tread on you, and take care of the cats!"

And so they came into the poultry-yard. There was a terrible riot going on in there, for two families were quarrelling about an eel's head, and the cat got it after all.

"See, that's how it goes in the world!" said the Mother-Duck; and she whetted her beak, for she, too, wanted the eel's head. "Only use your legs," she said. "See that you can bustle about, and bow your heads before the old duck yonder. She's the grandest of all here; she's of Spanish blood—that's why she's so fat; and do you see, she has a red rag round her leg; that's something particularly fine, and the greatest distinction a duck can enjoy: it signifies that one does not want to lose her, and that she's to be recognized by man and beast. Shake yourselves—don't turn in your toes; a

well-brought-up duck turns its toes quite out, just like father and mother, so! Now bend your necks and say 'Rap!'

And they did so; but the other ducks round about looked at them, and said quite boldly:

"Look there! Now we're to have these hanging on as if there were not enough of us already! And—fie!—how that Duckling yonder looks; we won't stand that!" And one duck flew up immediately, and bit it in the neck.

"Let it alone," said the mother; "it does no harm to any one."

"Yes, but it's too large and peculiar," said the Duck who had bitten it; "and therefore it must be buffeted."

"Those are pretty children that the mother has there," said the old Duck with the rag round her leg. "They're all pretty but that one; that was a failure. I wish she could alter it."

"That cannot be done, my lady," replied the Mother-Duck. "It is not pretty, but it has a really good disposition, and swims as well as any other; I may even say it swims better. I think it will grow up pretty, and become smaller in time; it has lain too long in the egg, and therefore is not properly shaped." And then she pinched it in the neck, and smoothed its feathers. "Moreover, it is a drake," she said, "and therefore it is not so much consequence. I think he will be very strong; he makes his way already."

"The other ducklings are graceful enough," said the old Duck. "Make yourself at home; and if you find an eel's head, you may bring it me."

And now they were at home. But the poor Duckling which had crept last out of the egg, and looked so ugly,

was bitten and pushed and jeered, as much by the ducks as by the chickens.

"It is too big!" they all said. And the turkey-cock, who had been born with spurs, and therefore thought himself an emperor, blew himself up like a ship in full sail, and bore straight down upon it; then he gobbled, and grew quite red in the face. The poor Duckling did not know where it should stand or walk; it was quite melancholy because it looked ugly, and was scoffed at by the whole yard.

So it went on the first day; and afterward it became worse and worse. The poor Duckling was hunted about by every one; even its brothers and sisters were quite angry with it, and said, "If the cat would only catch you, you ugly creature!" And the mother said, "If you were only far away!" And the ducks bit it, and the chickens beat it, and the girl who had to feed the poultry kicked at it with her foot.

Then it ran and flew over the fence, and the little birds in the bushes flew up in fear.

"That is because I am so ugly!" thought the Duckling; and it shut its eyes, but flew on farther; thus it came out into the great moor, where the wild ducks lived. Here it lay the whole night long; and it was weary and downcast.

Toward morning the wild ducks flew up, and looked at their new companion.

"What sort of a one are you?" they asked; and the Duckling turned in every direction, and bowed as well as it could. "You are remarkably ugly!" said the Wild Ducks. "But that is very indifferent to us, so long as you do not marry into our family."

Poor thing! It certainly did not think of marrying,

and only hoped to obtain leave to lie among the reeds and drink some of the swamp water.

Thus it lay two whole days; then came thither two wild geese, or, properly speaking, two wild ganders. It was not long since each had crept out of an egg, and that's why they were so saucy.

"Listen, comrade," said one of them. "You're so ugly that I like you. Will you go with us, and become a bird of passage? Near here, in another moor, there are a few sweet lovely wild geese, all unmarried, and all able to say 'Rap!' You've a chance of making your fortune, ugly as you are!"

"Piff! paff!" resounded through the air; and the two ganders fell down dead in the swamp, and the water became blood-red. "Piff! paff" it sounded again, and whole flocks of wild geese rose up from the reeds. And then there was another report. A great hunt was going on. The hunters were lying in wait all round the moor, and some were even sitting up in the branches of the trees, which spread far over the reeds. The blue smoke rose up like clouds among the dark trees, and was wafted far away across the water; and the hunting dogs came—splash, splash!—into the swamp, and the rushes and the reeds bent down on every side. That was a fright for the poor Duckling! It turned its head, and put it under its wing; but at that moment a frightful great dog stood close by the Duckling. His tongue hung far out of his mouth and his eyes gleamed horrible and ugly; he thrust out his nose close against the Duckling, showed his sharp teeth, and—splash, splash!—on he went, without seizing it.

"Oh, Heaven be thanked!" sighed the Duckling. "I am so ugly that even the dog does not like to bite me!"

And so it lay quite quiet, while the shots rattled through the reeds and gun after gun was fired. At last, late in the day, silence was restored; but the poor Duckling did not dare to rise up; it waited several hours before it looked round, and then hastened away out of the moor as fast as it could. It ran on over field and meadow; there was such a storm raging that it was difficult to get from one place to another.

Toward evening the Duckling came to a little miserable peasant's hut. This hut was so dilapidated that it did not know on which side it should fall; and that's why it remained standing. The storm whistled round the Duckling in such a way that the poor creature was obliged to sit down, to stand against it; and the tempest grew worse and worse. Then the Duckling noticed that one of the hinges of the door had given way, and the door hung so slanting that the Duckling could slip through the crack into the room; and it did so.

Here lived a woman, with her Tom Cat and her Hen. And the Tom Cat, whom she called Sonnie, could arch his back and purr, he could even give out sparks; but for that one had to stroke his fur the wrong way. The Hen had quite little short legs, and therefore she was called Chickabiddy-shortshanks; she laid good eggs, and the woman loved her as her own child.

In the morning the strange Duckling was at once noticed, and the Tom Cat began to purr, and the Hen to cluck.

"What's this?" said the woman, and looked all round; but she could not see well, and therefore she thought the Duckling was a fat duck that had strayed. "This is a rare prize!" she said. "Now I shall have duck's eggs. I hope it is not a drake. We must try that."

And so the Duckling was admitted on trial for three weeks; but no eggs came. And the Tom Cat was master of the house, and the Hen was the lady, and always said, "We and the world!" for she thought they were half the world, and by far the better half. The Duckling thought one might have a different opinion, but the Hen would not allow it.

"Can you lay eggs?" she asked.

"No."

"Then you'll have the goodness to hold your tongue."

And the Tom Cat said, "Can you curve your back, and purr, and give out sparks?"

"No."

"Then you cannot have any opinion of your own when sensible people are speaking."

And the Duckling sat in a corner and was melancholy; then the fresh air and the sunshine streamed in; and it was seized with such a strange longing to swim on the water, that it could not help telling the Hen of it.

"What are you thinking of?" cried the Hen. "You have nothing to do, that's why you have these fancies. Purr or lay eggs, and they will pass over."

"But it is so charming to swim on the water!" said the Duckling, "so refreshing to let it close above one's head, and to dive down to the bottom."

"Yes, that must be a mighty pleasure truly," quoth the Hen. "I fancy you must have gone crazy. Ask the Cat about it—he's the cleverest animal I know—ask him if he likes to swim on the water, or to dive down: I won't speak about myself. Ask our mistress, the old woman; no one in the world is cleverer than she. Do you think she has any desire to swim, and to let the water close above her head?"

"You don't understand me," said the Duckling.

"We don't understand you! Then pray who is to understand you? You surely don't pretend to be cleverer than the Tom Cat and the woman—I won't say anything of myself. Don't be conceited, child, and be grateful for all the kindness you have received. Did you not get into a warm room, and have you not fallen into company from which you may learn something? But you are a chatterer, and it is not pleasant to associate with you. You may believe me, I speak for your good. I tell you disagreeable things, and by that one may always know one's true friends! Only take care that you learn to lay eggs, or to purr and give out sparks!"

"I think I will go out into the wide world," said the Duckling.

"Yes, do go," replied the Hen.

And the Duckling went away. It swam on the water, and dived, but it was slighted by every creature because of its ugliness.

Now came the autumn. The leaves in the forest turned yellow and brown; the wind caught them so that they danced about, and up in the air it was very cold. The clouds hung low, heavy with hail and snowflakes, and on the fence stood the raven, crying, "Croak! croak!" for mere cold; yes, it was enough to make one feel cold to think of this. The poor little Duckling certainly had not a good time. One evening—the sun was just setting in his beauty—there came a whole flock of great handsome birds out of the bushes; they were dazzlingly white, with long flexible necks; they were swans. They uttered a very peculiar cry, spread forth their glorious great wings, and flew away from that

cold region to warmer lands, to fair open lakes. They mounted so high, so high! and the ugly little Duckling felt quite strangely as it watched them. It turned round and round in the water like a wheel, stretched out its neck toward them, and uttered such a strange loud cry as frightened itself. Oh! it could not forget those beautiful, happy birds; and so soon as it could see them no longer, it dived down to the very bottom, and when it came up again, it was quite beside itself. It knew not the name of those birds, and knew not whither they were flying; but it loved them more than it had ever loved any one. It was not at all envious of them. How could it think of wishing to possess such loveliness as they had? It would have been glad if only the ducks would have endured its company—the poor ugly creature!

And the winter grew cold, very cold! The Duckling was forced to swim about in the water, to prevent the surface from freezing entirely; but every night the hole in which it swam about became smaller and smaller. It froze so hard that the icy covering crackled again; and the Duckling was obliged to use its legs continually to prevent the hole from freezing up. At last it became exhausted, and lay quite still, and thus froze fast into the ice.

Early in the morning a peasant came by, and when he saw what had happened, he took his wooden shoe, broke the ice-crust to pieces, and carried the Duckling home to his wife. Then it came to itself again. The children wanted to play with it; but the Duckling thought they would do it an injury, and in its terror fluttered up into the milk-pan, so that the milk spurted down into the room. The woman clapped her hands,

at which the Duckling flew down into the butter-tub, and then into the meal-barrel and out again. How it looked then! The woman screamed, and struck at it with the fire-tongs; the children tumbled over one another in their efforts to catch the Duckling; and they laughed and screamed finely! Happily the door stood open, and the poor creature was able to slip out between the shrubs into the newly fallen snow; and there it lay quite exhausted.

But it would be too melancholy if I were to tell all the misery and care which the Duckling had to endure in the hard winter. It lay out on the moor among the reeds, when the sun began to shine again and the larks to sing: it was a beautiful spring.

Then all at once the Duckling could flap its wings: they beat the air more strongly than before, and bore it strongly away; and before it well knew how all this happened, it found itself in a great garden, where the elder-trees smelt sweet, and bent their long green branches down to the canal that wound through the region. Oh, here it was so beautiful, such a gladness of spring! and from the thicket came three glorious white swans; they rustled their wings, and swam lightly on the water. The Duckling knew the splendid creatures, and felt oppressed by a peculiar sadness.

"I will fly away to them, to the royal birds! and they will kill me, because I, that am so ugly, dare to approach them. But it is of no consequence! Better to be killed by them *than* to be pursued by ducks, and beaten by fowls, and pushed about by the girl who takes care of the poultry-yard, and to suffer hunger in winter!" And it flew out into the water, and swam toward the beautiful swans: these looked at it, and came sailing

down upon it with outspread wings. "Kill me!" said the poor creature, and bent its head down upon the water, expecting nothing but death. But what was this that it saw in the clear water? It beheld its own image; and, lo! it was no longer a clumsy dark grey bird, ugly and hateful to look at, but—a swan!

It matters nothing if one is born in a duck-yard, if one has only lain in a swan's egg.

It felt quite glad at all the need and misfortune it had suffered, now it realized its happiness in all the splendour that surrounded it. And the great swans swam round it, and stroked it with their beaks.

Into the garden came little children, who threw bread and corn into the water; and the youngest cried, "There is a new one!" and the other children shouted joyously, "Yes, a new one has arrived!" And they clapped their hands and danced about, and ran to their father and mother; and bread and cake were thrown into the water; and they all said, "The new one is the most beautiful of all! so young and handsome!" and the old swans bowed their heads before him.

Then he felt quite ashamed, and hid his head under his wings, for he did not know what to do; he was so happy, and yet not at all proud. He thought how he had been persecuted and despised; and now he heard them saying that he was the most beautiful of all birds. Even the elder-tree bent its branches straight down into the water before him, and the sun shone warm and mild. Then his wings rustled, he lifted his slender neck, and cried rejoicingly from the depths of his heart:

"I never dreamed of so much happiness when I was still the ugly Duckling!"

THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPER

HAVE you ever seen a very old wooden cupboard, quite black with age, and ornamented with carved foliage and arabesques? Just such a cupboard stood in a parlour: it had been a legacy from the great-grandmother, and was covered from top to bottom with carved roses and tulips. There were the quaintest flourishes upon it, and from among these peered forth little stags' heads with antlers. In the middle of the cupboard door an entire figure of a man had been cut out: he was certainly ridiculous to look at, and he grinned, for you could not call it laughing: he had goat's legs, little horns on his head, and a long beard. The children in the room always called him the Billygoat-legs-Lieutenant-and-Major-General-War-Commander-Sergeant; that was a difficult name to pronounce, and there are not many who obtain this title; but it was something to have cut him out. And there he was. He was always looking at the table under the mirror, for on this table stood a lovely little Shepherdess made of china. Her shoes were gilt, her dress was adorned with a red rose, and besides this she had a golden hat and a shepherd's crook: she was very lovely. Close by her stood a little Chimney-Sweeper, black as a coal, and also made of porcelain: he was as clean and neat as any other man, for it was only make-believe that he was a sweep; the china-workers might

just as well have made a prince of him, if they had been so minded.

There he stood very nattily with his ladder, and with a face as white and pink as a girl's; and that was really a fault, for he ought to have been a little black. He stood quite close to the Shepherdess: they had both been placed where they stood; but as they had been placed there they had become engaged to each other. They suited each other well. Both were young people, both made of the same kind of china, and both were brittle.

Close to them stood another figure, three times greater than they. This was an old Chinaman, who could nod. He was also of porcelain, and declared himself to be the grandfather of the little Shepherdess; but he could not prove his relationship. He declared he had authority over her, and that therefore he had nodded to Mr. Billygoat-legs-Lieutenant-and-Major-General-War-Commander-Sergeant, who was wooing her for his wife.

"Then you will get a husband!" said the old Chinaman, "a man who I verily believe is made of mahogany. He can make you Billygoat-legs-Lieutenant-and-Major-General-War-Commander-Sergeant's lady: he has the whole cupboard full of silver plate, which he hoards up in secret drawers."

"I won't go into the dark cupboard!" said the little Shepherdess. "I have heard tell that he has eleven porcelain wives in there."

"Then you may become the twelfth," cried the Chinaman. "This night, so soon as it rattles in the old cupboard, you shall be married, as true as I am an old Chinaman!"

And with that he nodded his head and fell asleep.

SHEPHERDESS AND CHIMNEY-SWEEP103

But the little Shepherdess wept and looked at her heart's beloved, the porcelain Chimney-Sweeper.

"I should like to beg of you," said she, "to go out with me into the wide world, for we cannot remain here."

"I'll do whatever you like," replied the little Chimney-Sweeper. "Let us start directly! I think I can keep you by exercising my profession."

"If we were only safely down from the table!" said she. "I shall not be happy until we are out in the wide world."

And he comforted her, and showed her how she must place her little foot upon the carved corners and the gilded foliage at the foot of the table; he brought his ladder too, to help her, and they were soon together upon the floor. But when they looked up at the old cupboard there was great commotion within: all the carved stags were stretching out their heads, rearing up their antlers, and turning their necks; and the Billygoat-legs-Lieutenant-and-Major-General-War-Commander-Sergeant sprang high in the air, and called across to the old Chinaman:

"Now they're running away! Now they're running away!"

Then they were a little frightened, and jumped quickly into the drawer of the window-seat. Here were three or four packs of cards which were not complete, and a little puppet-show, which had been built up as well as it could be done. There plays were acted, and all the ladies, diamonds, clubs, hearts, and spades, sat in the first row, fanning themselves; and behind them stood all the knaves, showing that they had a head above and below, as is usual in play-cards. The play

was about two people who were not to be married to each other, and the Shepherdess wept, because it was just like her own history.

"I cannot bear this!" said she. "I must go out of the drawer."

But when they arrived on the floor, and looked up at the table, the old Chinaman was awake and was shaking over his whole body—for below he was all one lump.

"Now the old Chinaman's coming!" cried the little Shepherdess and she fell down upon her porcelain knee, so startled was she.

"I have an idea," said the Chimney-Sweeper. "Shall we creep into the great potpourri vase, which stands in the corner? Then we can lie on roses and lavender, and throw salt in his eyes if he comes."

"That will be of no use," she replied. "Besides, I know that the old Chinaman and the potpourri vase were once engaged to each other, and a kind of liking always remains when people have stood in such a relation to each other. No, there's nothing left for us but to go out into the wide world."

"Have you really courage to go into the wide world with me?" asked the Chimney-Sweeper. "Have you considered how wide the world is, and that we can never come back here again?"

"I have," replied she.

And the Chimney-Sweeper looked fondly at her, and said:

"My way is through the chimney. If you have really courage to creep with me through the stove—through the iron fire-box as well as up the pipe, then we can get out into the chimney, and I know how to find my way through there. We'll mount so high that they can't

catch us, and quite at the top there's a hole that leads out into the wide world."

And he led her to the door of the stove.

"It looks very black there," said she; but still she went with him, through the box and through the pipe, where it was pitch-dark night.

"Now we are in the chimney," said he; "and look, look! up yonder a beautiful star is shining."

And it was a real star in the sky, which shone straight down upon them, as if it would show them the way. And they clambered and crept: it was a frightful way, and terribly steep; but he supported her and helped her up; he held her, and showed her the best places where she could place her little porcelain feet; and thus they reached the edge of the chimney, and upon that they sat down, for they were desperately tired, as they well might be.

The sky with all its stars was high above, and all the roofs of the town deep below them. They looked far around—far, far out into the world. The poor Shepherdess had never thought of it as it really was: she leaned her little head against the Chimney-Sweeper, then she wept so bitterly that the gold ran down off her girdle.

"That is too much," she said. "I cannot bear that. The world is too large! If I were only back upon the table below the mirror! I shall never be happy until I am there again. Now I have followed you out into the wide world, you may accompany me back again if you really love me."

And the Chimney-Sweeper spoke sensibly to her—spoke of the old Chinaman and of the Billygoat-legs-Lieutenant-and-Major-General-War-Commander-Ser-

geant; but she sobbed bitterly and kissed her little Chimney-Sweeper, so that he could not help giving way to her, though it was foolish.

And so with much labour they climbed down the chimney again. And they crept through the pipe and the fire-box. That was not pleasant at all. And there they stood in the dark stove; there they listened behind the door, to find out what was going on in the room. Then it was quite quiet—they looked in—ah! there lay the old Chinaman in the middle of the floor! He had fallen down from the table as he was pursuing them, and now he lay broken into three pieces; his back had come off all in one piece, and his head had rolled into a corner. The Billygoat-legs-Lieutenant-and-Major-General-War-Commander-Sergeant stood where he had always stood, considering.

"That is terrible!" said the little Shepherdess. "The old grandfather has fallen to pieces, and it is our fault. I shall never survive it!" And then she wrung her little hands.

"He can be mended! He can be mended!" said the Chimney-Sweeper. "Don't be so violent. If they glue his back together and give him a good rivet in his neck he will be as good as new, and may say many a disagreeable thing to us yet."

"Do you think so?" cried she.

So they climbed back upon the table where they used to stand.

"You see, we have come to this," said the Chimney-Sweeper: "we might have saved ourselves all the trouble we have had."

"If the old grandfather was only riveted!" said the Shepherdess. "I wonder if that is dear?"

And he was really riveted. The family had his back cemented, and a great rivet was passed through his neck: he was as good as new, only he could no longer nod.

"It seems you have become proud since you fell to pieces," said the Billygoat-legs-Lieutenant-and-Major-General-War-Commander-Sergeant. "I don't think you have any reason to give yourself such airs. Am I to have her, or am I not?"

And the Chimney-Sweeper and the little Shepherdess looked at the old Chinaman most piteously, for they were afraid he might nod. But he could not do that, and it was irksome to him to tell a stranger that he always had a rivet in his neck. And so the porcelain people remained together, and loved one another until they broke.

THE FIR TREE

OUT in the forest stood a pretty little Fir Tree. It had a good place; it could have sunlight, air there was in plenty, and all around grew many larger comrades—pines as well as firs. But the little Fir Tree wished ardently to become greater. It did not care for the warm sun and the fresh air; it took no notice of the peasant children, who went about talking together, when they had come out to look for strawberries and raspberries. Often they came with a whole potful, or had strung berries on a straw; then they would sit down by the little Fir Tree and say, "How pretty and small that one is!" and the Tree did not like to hear that at all.

Next year he had grown a great joint, and the following year he was longer still, for in fir trees one can always tell by the number of rings they have how many years they have been growing.

"Oh, if I were only as great a tree as the others!" sighed the little Fir, "then I would spread my branches far around, and look out from my crown into the wide world. The birds would then build nests in my boughs, and when the wind blew I could nod just as grandly as the others yonder."

It took no pleasure in the sunshine, in the birds, and in the red clouds that went sailing over him morning and evening.

When it was winter, and the snow lay all around,

white and sparkling, a hare would often come jumping along, and spring right over the little Fir Tree. Oh! this made him so angry. But two winters went by, and when the third came the little Tree had grown so tall that the hare was obliged to run round it.

"Oh! to grow, to grow, and become old; that's the only fine thing in the world," thought the Tree.

In the autumn woodcutters always came and felled a few of the largest trees; that was done this year too, and the little Fir Tree, that was now quite well grown, shuddered with fear, for the great stately trees fell to the ground with a crash, and their branches were cut off, so that the trees looked quite naked, long, and slender—they could hardly be recognized. But then they were laid upon wagons, and horses dragged them away out of the wood. Where were they going? What destiny awaited them?

In the spring, when the Swallows and the Stork came, the Tree asked them, "Do you know where they were taken? Did you not meet them?"

The Swallows knew nothing about it, but the Stork looked thoughtful, nodded his head, and said:

"Yes, I think so. I met many new ships when I flew out of Egypt; on the ships were stately masts; I fancy that these were the trees. They smelt like fir. I can assure you they're stately—very stately."

"Oh that I were only big enough to go over the sea! What kind of thing is this sea, and how does it look?"

"It would take too long to explain all that," said the Stork, and he went away.

"Rejoice in thy youth," said the Sunbeams; "rejoice in thy fresh growth, and in the young life that is within thee."

And the wind kissed the Tree, and the dew wept tears upon it; but the Fir Tree did not understand that.

When Christmas-time approached, quite young trees were felled, sometimes trees which were neither so old nor so large as this Fir Tree, that never rested but always wanted to go away. These young trees, which were almost the most beautiful, kept all their branches; they were put upon wagons, and horses dragged them away out of the wood.

"Where are they all going?" asked the Fir Tree. "They are not greater than I—indeed one of them was much smaller. Why do they keep all their branches? Whither are they taken?"

"We know that! We know that!" chirped the Sparrows. "Yonder in the town we looked in at the windows. We know where they go. Oh! they are dressed up in the greatest pomp and splendour that can be imagined. We have looked in at the windows, and have perceived that they are planted in the middle of the warm room, and adorned with the most beautiful things—gilt apples, honey-cakes, playthings, and many hundreds of candles."

"And then?" asked the Fir Tree, and trembled through all its branches. "And then? What happens then?"

"Why, we have not seen anything more. But it was incomparable."

"Perhaps I may be destined to tread this glorious path one day!" cried the Fir Tree rejoicingly. "That is even better than travelling across the sea. How painfully I long for it! If it were only Christmas now! Now I am great and grown up, like the rest

who were led away last year. Oh, if I were only on the carriage! If I were only in the warm room, among all the pomp and splendour! And then? Yes, then something even better will come, something far more charming, or else why should they adorn me so? There must be something grander, something greater still to come; but what? Oh! I'm suffering, I'm longing! I don't know myself what is the matter with me!"

"Rejoice in us," said Air and Sunshine. "Rejoice in thy fresh youth here in the woodland."

But the Fir Tree did not rejoice at all, but it grew and grew; winter and summer it stood there, green, dark green. The people who saw it said, "That's a handsome tree!" and at Christmas-time it was felled before any one of the others. The axe cut deep into its marrow, and the tree fell to the ground with a sigh: it felt a pain, a sensation of faintness, and could not think at all of happiness, for it was sad at parting from its home, from the place where it had grown up: it knew that it should never again see the dear old companions, the little bushes and flowers all around—perhaps not even the birds. The parting was not at all agreeable.

The Tree only came to itself when it was unloaded in a yard, with the other trees, and heard a man say:

"This one is famous; we only want this one!"

Now two servants came in gay liveries, and carried the Fir Tree into a large beautiful saloon. All around the walls hung pictures, and by the great stove stood large Chinese vases with lions on the covers; there were rocking-chairs, silken sofas; great tables covered with picture-books, and toys worth a hundred times a hundred dollars, at least the children said so. And the

Fir Tree was put into a great tub filled with sand; but no one could see that it was a tub, for it was hung round with green cloth, and stood on a large many-coloured carpet. Oh, how the Tree trembled! What was to happen now? The servants, and the young ladies also, decked it out. On one branch they hung little nets, cut out of coloured paper; every net was filled with sweetmeats; golden apples and walnuts hung down as if they grew there, and more than a hundred little candles, red, white, and blue, were fastened to the different boughs. Dolls that looked exactly like real people—the Tree had never seen such before—swung among the foliage, and high on the summit of the Tree was fixed a tinsel star. It was splendid, particularly splendid.

"This evening," said all, "this evening it will shine."

"Oh," thought the Tree, "that it were evening already! Oh that the lights may be soon lit up! When may that be done? I wonder if trees will come out of the forest to look at me? Will the sparrows fly against the panes? Shall I grow fast here, and stand adorned in summer and winter?"

Yes, he did not guess badly. But he had a complete backache from mere longing, and the backache is just as bad for a Tree as the headache for a person.

At last the candles were lighted. What a brilliance, what splendour! The Tree trembled so in all its branches that one of the candles set fire to a green twig, and it was scorched.

"Heaven preserve us!" cried the young ladies; and they hastily put the fire out.

Now the Tree might not even tremble. Oh, that was

terrible! It was so afraid of setting fire to some of its ornaments, and it was quite bewildered with all the brilliance. And now the folding doors were thrown open, and a number of children rushed in as if they would have overturned the whole Tree; the older people followed more deliberately. The little ones stood quite silent, but only for a minute; then they shouted till the room rang: they danced gleefully round the Tree, and one present after another was plucked from it.

“What are they about?” thought the Tree. “What’s going to be done?”

And the candles burned down to the twigs, and as they burned down they were extinguished, and then the children received permission to plunder the Tree. Oh! they rushed in upon it, so that every branch cracked again: if it had not been fastened by the top and by the golden star to the ceiling, it would have fallen down.

The children danced about with their pretty toys. No one looked at the Tree except one old man, who came up and peeped among the branches, but only to see if a fig or an apple had not been forgotten.

“A story! a story!” shouted the children: and they drew a little fat man toward the Tree; and he sat down just beneath it—“for then we shall be in the green wood,” said he, “and the tree may have the advantage of listening to my tale. But I can only tell one. Will you hear the story of Ivede-Avede, or of Klumpey-Dumpey, who fell downstairs, and still was raised up to honour and married the Princess?”

“Ivede-Avede!” cried some, “Klumpey-Dumpey!” cried others, and there was a great crying and shouting. Only the Fir Tree was quite silent, and thought, “Shall

I not be in it? Shall I have nothing to do in it?" But he had been in the evening's amusement, and had done what was required of him.

And the fat man told about Klumpey-Dumpey, who fell downstairs, and yet was raised to honour and married the Princess. And the children clapped their hands, and cried, "Tell another! tell another!" for they wanted to hear about Ivede-Avede; but they only got the story of Klumpey-Dumpey. The Fir Tree stood quite silent and thoughtful; never had the birds in the wood told such a story as that. Klumpey-Dumpey fell downstairs, and yet came to honour and married the Princess!

"Yes, so it happens in the world!" thought the Fir Tree, and believed it must be true, because that was such a nice man who told it. "Well, who can know? Perhaps I shall fall downstairs too, and marry a Princess!" And it looked forward with pleasure to being adorned again, the next evening, with candles and toys, gold and fruit. "To-morrow I shall not tremble," it thought. "I will rejoice in all my splendour. To-morrow I shall hear the story of Klumpey-Dumpey again, and, perhaps, that of Ivede-Avede too."

And the Tree stood all night quiet and thoughtful.

In the morning the servants and the chambermaid came in.

"Now my splendour will begin afresh," thought the Tree. But they dragged him out of the room, and upstairs to the garret, and here they put him in a dark corner where no daylight shone.

"What's the meaning of this?" thought the Tree. "What am I to do here? What is to happen?"

And he leaned against the wall, and thought, and thought. And he had time enough, for days and nights went by, and nobody came up; and when at length some one came, it was only to put some great boxes in a corner. Now the Tree stood quite hidden away, and the supposition was that it was quite forgotten.

"Now it's winter outside," thought the Tree. "The earth is hard and covered with snow, and people cannot plant me; therefore I suppose I'm to be sheltered here until spring comes. How considerate that is! How good people are! If it were only not so dark here, and so terribly solitary!—not even a little hare! That was pretty out there in the wood, when the snow lay thick and the hare sprang past; yes, even when he jumped over me; but then I did not like it. It is terribly lonely up here!"

"Piep! piep!" said a little Mouse, and crept forward, and then came another little one. They smelt at the Fir Tree, and then slipped among the branches.

"It's horribly cold," said the two little Mice, "or else it would be comfortable here. Don't you think so, you old Fir Tree?"

"I'm not old at all," said the Fir Tree. "There are many much older than I."

"Where do you come from?" asked the Mice. "And what do you know?" They were dreadfully inquisitive. "Tell us about the most beautiful spot on earth. Have you been there? Have you been in the store-room, where the cheeses lie on the shelves, and hams hang from the ceiling, where one dances on tallow candles, and goes in thin and comes out fat?"

'I don't know that!' replied the Tree; "but I know

the wood, where the sun shines, and where the birds sing."

And then it told all about its youth.

And the little Mice had never heard anything of the kind; and they listened and said:

"What a number of things you have seen! How happy you must have been!"

"I?" said the Fir Tree; and it thought about what it had told. "Yes, those were really quite happy times." But then he told of the Christmas Eve, when he had been hung with sweetmeats and candles.

"Oh!" said the little Mice, "how happy you have been, you old Fir Tree!"

"I'm not old at all," said the Tree. "I only came out of the wood this winter. I'm only rather backward in my growth."

"What splendid stories you can tell!" said the little Mice.

And next night they came with four other little Mice, to hear what the Tree had to relate; and the more it said, the more clearly did it remember everything, and thought, "Those were quite merry days! But they may come again. Klumpey-Dumpey fell downstairs, and yet he married the Princess. Perhaps I may marry a Princess too!" And then the Fir Tree thought of a pretty little birch tree that grew out in the forest: for the Fir Tree, that birch was a real Princess.

"Who's Klumpey-Dumpey?" asked the little Mice.

And then the Fir Tree told the whole story. It could remember every single word; and the little Mice were ready to leap to the very top of the tree with pleasure. Next night a great many more Mice came,

and on Sunday two Rats even appeared; but these thought the story was not pretty, and the little Mice were sorry for that, for now they also did not like it so much as before.

"Do you only know one story?" asked the Rats.

"Only that one," replied the Tree. "I heard that on the happiest evening of my life; I did not think then how happy I was."

"That's a very miserable story. Don't you know any about bacon and tallow candles—a store-room story?"

"No," said the Tree.

"Then we'd rather not hear you," said the Rats.

And they went back to their own people. The little Mice at last stayed away also; and then the Tree sighed and said:

"It was very nice when they sat round me, the merry little Mice, and listened when I spoke to them. Now that's past too. But I shall remember to be pleased when they take me out."

But when did that happen? Why, it was one morning that people came and rummaged in the garret: the boxes were put away, and the Tree brought out; they certainly threw him rather roughly on the floor, but a servant dragged him away at once to the stairs, where the daylight shone.

"Now life is beginning again!" thought the Tree.

It felt the fresh air and the first sunbeams, and now it was out in the courtyard. Everything passed so quickly that the Tree quite forgot to look at itself, there was so much to look at all round. The courtyard was close to a garden, and here everything was blooming; the roses hung fresh and fragrant over the little paling,

the linden trees were in blossom, and the swallows cried, "Quinze-wit! quinze-wit! my husband's come!" But it was not the Fir Tree that they meant.

"Now I shall live!" said the Tree rejoicingly, and spread its branches far out; but, alas! they were all withered and yellow; and it lay in the corner among nettles and weeds. The tinsel star was still upon it, and shone in the bright sunshine.

In the courtyard a couple of the merry children were playing, who had danced round the tree at Christmas-time, and had rejoiced over it. One of the youngest ran up and tore off the golden star.

"Look what is sticking to the ugly old fir tree," said the child, and he trod upon the branches till they cracked again under his boots.

And the Tree looked at all the blooming flowers and the splendour of the garden, and then looked at itself, and wished it had remained in the dark corner of the garret; it thought of its fresh youth in the wood, of the merry Christmas Eve, and of the little Mice which had listened so pleasantly to the story of Klumpey-Dumpey.

"Past! past!" said the old Tree. "Had I but rejoiced when I could have done so! Past! past!"

And the servant came and chopped the Tree into little pieces; a whole bundle lay there: it blazed brightly under the great brewing copper, and it sighed deeply, and each sigh was like a little shot: and the children who were at play there ran up and seated themselves at the fire, looked into it, and cried, "Puff! puff!" But at each explosion, which was a deep sigh, the tree thought of a summer day in the woods, or of a winter night there, when the stars beamed; he thought of Christmas Eve and of Klumpey-Dumpey, the only

story he had ever heard or knew how to tell; and then the Tree was burned.

The boys played in the garden, and the youngest had on his breast a golden star, which the Tree had worn on its happiest evening. Now that was past, and the Tree's life was past, and the story is past too: past! past!—and that's the way with all stories.

THE SWINEHERD

THERE was once a poor Prince, who had a kingdom which was quite small, but still it was large enough that he could marry upon it, and that is what he wanted to do.

Now, it was certainly somewhat bold of him to say to the Emperor's daughter, "Will you have me?" But he did venture it, for his name was famous far and wide: there were hundreds of Princesses who would have been glad to say yes; but did *she* say so? Well, we shall see.

On the grave of the Prince's father there grew a rose-bush, a very beautiful rose-bush. It bloomed only every fifth year, and even then it bore only a single rose, but what a rose that was! It was so sweet that whoever smelt at it forgot all sorrow and trouble. And then he had a nightingale, which could sing as if all possible melodies were collected in its little throat. This rose and this nightingale the Princess was to have, and therefore they were put into great silver vessels and sent to her.

The Emperor caused the presents to be carried before him into the great hall where the Princess was playing at "visiting" with her maids of honour, and when she saw the great silver vessels with the presents in them, she clapped her hands with joy.

"If it were only a little pussy-cat!" said she.

But then came out the rose-bush with the splendid rose.

"Oh, how prettily it is made!" said all the court ladies.

"It is more than pretty," said the Emperor, "it is charming."

But the Princess felt it, and then she almost began to cry.

"Fie, papa!" she said, "it is not artificial, it's a *natural* rose!"

"Fie," said all the court ladies, "it's a natural one!"

"Let us first see what is in the other vessel before we get angry," said the Emperor. And then the nightingale came out; it sang so beautifully that they did not at once know what to say against it.

"*Superbe! charmant!*" said the maids of honour, for they all spoke French as badly as possible.

"How that bird reminds me of the late Emperor's musical snuff-box," said an old cavalier. "Yes, it is the same tone, the same expression."

"Yes," said the Emperor; and then he wept like a little child at the remembrance of his dead father.

"I really hope it is not a natural bird," said the Princess.

"Yes, it is a natural bird," said they who had brought it.

"Then let the bird fly away," said the Princess; and she would by no means allow the Prince to come.

But the Prince was not to be frightened. He stained his face brown and black, drew his hat down over his brows, and knocked at the door.

"Good day, Emperor," he said: "could I not be employed here in the castle?"

"Yes," replied the Emperor, "but there are so many who ask for an appointment that I do not know if it can be managed; but I'll bear you in mind. But it

just occurs to me that I want some one who can keep the pigs, for we have many pigs here, very many."

So the Prince was appointed the Emperor's swineherd. He received a miserable small room down by the pigsty, and here he was obliged to stay; but all day long he sat and worked, and when it was evening he had finished a neat little pot, with bells all round it, and when the pot boiled these bells rang out prettily and played the old melody:

Oh, my darling Augustine,
All is lost, all is lost.

But the cleverest thing about the whole arrangement was, that by holding one's finger in the smoke, one could at once smell what provisions were being cooked at every hearth in the town. That was quite a different thing from the rose.

Now the Princess came with all her maids of honour, and when she heard the melody she stood still and looked quite pleased; for she, too, could play "Oh, my darling Augustine," on the piano. It was the only thing she could play, but then she played it with one finger.

"Why, that is what I play!" she cried. "He must be an educated swineherd! Harkye: go down and ask the price of the instrument."

So one of the maids of honour had to go down; but first she put on a pair of pattens.

"What do you want for the pot?" inquired the lady.

"I want ten kisses from the Princess," replied the swineherd.

"Heaven preserve us!" exclaimed the maid of honour.

"Well, I won't sell it for less," said the swineherd.

"And what did he say?" said the Princess.



"WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR THE POT?" INQUIRED THE LADY

"I don't like to repeat it," replied the lady.

"Well, you can whisper it in my ear." And the lady whispered it to her. "He is very rude," declared the Princess; and she went away. But when she had gone a little way, the bells sounded so prettily:

Oh, my darling Augustine,
All is lost, all is lost.

"Harkye," said the Princess: "ask him if he will take ten kisses from my maids of honour."

"I'm much obliged," replied the swineherd: "ten kisses from the Princess, or I shall keep my pot."

"How tiresome that is!" cried the Princess. "But at least you must stand before me, so that nobody sees it."

And the maids of honour stood before her, and spread out their dresses, and then the swineherd received ten kisses, and she received the pot.

Then there was rejoicing! All the evening and all the day long the pot was kept boiling; there was not a kitchen hearth in the whole town of which they did not know what it had cooked, at the shoemaker's as well as the chamberlain's. The ladies danced with pleasure, and clapped their hands.

"We know who will have sweet soup and pancakes for dinner, and who has hasty pudding and cutlets; how interesting that is!"

"Very interesting!" said the head lady-superintendent.

"Yes, but keep counsel, for I'm the Emperor's daughter."

"Yes, certainly," said all.

The swineherd, that is to say, the Prince—but of course they did not know but that he was a regular

swineherd—let no day pass by without doing something, and so he made a rattle; when any person swung this rattle, he could play all the waltzes, hops, and polkas that have been known since the creation of the world.

"But that is *superbe!*" cried the Princess, as she went past. "I have never heard a finer composition. Harkye: go down and ask what the instrument costs; but I give no more kisses."

"He demands a hundred kisses from the Princess," said the maid of honour who had gone down to make the inquiry.

"I think he must be mad!" exclaimed the Princess; and she went away; but when she had gone a little distance she stood still. "One must encourage art," she observed. "I am the Emperor's daughter! Tell him he shall receive ten kisses, like last time, and he may take the rest from my maids of honour."

"Ah, but we don't like to do it!" said the maids of honour.

"That's all nonsense!" retorted the Princess, "and if I can allow myself to be kissed, you can too; remember, I give you board and wages."

And so the maids of honour had to go down to him again.

"A hundred kisses from the Princess," said he, "or each shall keep his own."

"Stand before me," said she then; and all the maids of honour stood before her while he kissed the Princess.

"What is that crowd down by the pigsty?" asked the Emperor, who had stepped out to the balcony. He rubbed his eyes, and put on his spectacles. "Why, those are the maids of honour, at their tricks, yonder; I shall have to go down to them."

And he pulled up his slippers behind, for they were shoes that he had trodden down at heel. Gracious mercy, how he hurried! So soon as he came down in the courtyard, he went quite softly, and the maids of honour were too busy counting the kisses, and seeing fair play, to notice the Emperor. Then he stood on tiptoe.

"What's that?" said he, when he saw that there was kissing going on; and he hit them on the head with his slipper, just as the swineherd was taking the eighty-sixth kiss.

"Be off!" said the Emperor, for he was angry.

And the Princess and the swineherd were both expelled from his dominions. So there she stood and cried, the rain streamed down, and the swineherd scolded.

"Oh, miserable wretch that I am!" said the Princess; "if I had only taken the handsome Prince! Oh, how unhappy I am!"

Then the swineherd went behind a tree, washed the stains from his face, threw away the shabby clothes, and stepped forth in his princely attire, so handsome that the Princess was fain to bow before him.

"I have come to this, that I despise you," said he. "You would not have an honest Prince; you did not value the rose and the nightingale, but for a plaything you kissed the swineherd, and now you have your reward."

And then he went into his kingdom and shut the door in her face. So now she might stand outside and sing:

Oh, my darling Augustine,
All is lost, all is lost.

THE SNOW QUEEN

IN SEVEN STORIES

FIRST STORY

WHICH TREATS OF THE MIRROR AND FRAGMENTS

LOOK you, now we're going to begin. When we are at the end of the story we shall know more than we do now, for he was a bad goblin. He was one of the very worst, for he was a demon. One day he was in very good spirits, for he had made a mirror which had this peculiarity, that everything good and beautiful that was reflected in it shrank together into almost nothing, but that whatever was worthless and looked ugly became prominent and looked worse than ever. The most lovely landscapes seen in this mirror looked like boiled spinach, and the best people became hideous, or stood on their heads and had no bodies; their faces were so distorted as to be unrecognizable, and a single freckle was shown spread out over nose and mouth. That was very amusing, the demon said. When a good pious thought passed through any person's mind, these were again shown in the mirror, so that the demon chuckled at his artistic invention. Those who visited the goblin school—for he kept a goblin school—declared everywhere that a wonder had been wrought. For now, they asserted, one could see, for the first time, how the world and the people in it

really looked. Now they wanted to fly up to heaven, to sneer and scoff at the angels themselves. The higher they flew with the mirror, the more it grinned; they could scarcely hold it fast. They flew higher and higher, and then the mirror trembled so terribly amid its grinning that it fell down out of their hands to the earth, where it was shattered into a hundred million million and more fragments. And now this mirror occasioned much more unhappiness than before; for some of the fragments were scarcely so large as a barley-corn, and these flew about in the world, and whenever they flew into any one's eye they stuck there, and those people saw everything wrongly, or had only eyes for the bad side of a thing, for every little fragment of the mirror had retained the same power which the whole glass possessed. A few persons even got a fragment of the mirror into their hearts, and that was terrible indeed, for such a heart became a block of ice. A few fragments of the mirror were so large that they were used as window-panes, but it was a bad thing to look at one's friends through these panes; other pieces were made into spectacles, and then it went badly when people put on these spectacles to see rightly and to be just; and then the demon laughed till his paunch shook, for it tickled him so. But without, some little fragments of glass still floated about in the air—and now we shall hear.

SECOND STORY

A LITTLE BOY AND A LITTLE GIRL

IN the great town, where there are many houses and so many people that there is not room enough for

every one to have a little garden, and where consequently most persons are compelled to be content with some flowers in flower-pots, were two poor children who possessed a garden somewhat larger than a flower-pot. They were not brother and sister, but they loved each other quite as much as if they had been. Their parents lived just opposite each other in two garrets, there where the roof of one neighbour's house joined that of another; and where the water-pipe ran between the two houses was a little window; one had only to step across the pipe to get from one window to the other.

The parents of each child had a great box, in which grew kitchen herbs that they used, and a little rose-bush; there was one in each box, and they grew famously. Now, it occurred to the parents to place the boxes across the pipe, so that they reached from one window to another, and looked quite like two embankments of flowers. Pea plants hung down over the boxes, and the rose-bushes shot forth long twigs, which clustered round the windows and bent down toward each other: it was almost like a triumphal arch of flowers and leaves. As the boxes were very high, and the children knew that they might not creep upon them, they often obtained permission to step out upon the roof behind the boxes, and to sit upon their little stools under the roses, and there they could play capitably.

In the winter there was an end of this amusement. The windows were sometimes quite frozen all over. But then they warmed copper shillings on the stove, and held the warm coins against the frozen pane; and this made a capital peep-hole, so round, so round! and behind it gleamed a pretty mild eye at each window;

and these eyes belonged to the little boy and the little girl. His name was Kay and the little girl's was Gerda.

In the summer they could get to one another at one bound; but in the winter they had to go down and up the long staircase, while the snow was pelting without.

"Those are the white bees swarming," said the old grandmother.

"Have they a Queen-bee?" asked the little boy. For he knew that there is one among the real bees.

"Yes, they have one," replied grandmamma. "She always flies where they swarm thickest. She is the largest of them all, and never remains quiet upon the earth; she flies up again into the black cloud. Many a midnight she is flying through the streets of the town, and looks in at the windows, and then they freeze in such a strange way, and look like flowers."

"Yes, I've seen that!" cried both the children; and now they knew that it was true.

"Can the Snow Queen come in here?" asked the little girl.

"Only let her come," cried the boy; "I'll set her upon the warm stove, and then she'll melt."

But grandmother smoothed his hair, and told some other tales.

In the evening, when little Kay was at home and half undressed, he clambered upon the chair by the window, and looked through the little hole. A few flakes of snow were falling outside, and one of them, the largest of them all, remained lying on the edge of one of the flower-boxes. The snowflake grew larger and larger, and at last became a maiden clothed in the finest white gauze, put together of millions of starry flakes. She

was beautiful and delicate, but of ice—of shining, glittering ice. Yet she was alive; her eyes flashed like two clear stars, but there was no peace or rest in them. She nodded toward the window, and beckoned with her hand. The little boy was frightened, and sprang down from the chair; then it seemed as if a great bird flew by outside, in front of the window.

Next day there was a clear frost, and then the spring came; the sun shone, the green sprouted forth, the swallows built nests, the windows were opened, and the little children again sat in their garden high up in the roof, over all the floors.

How splendidly the roses bloomed this summer! The little girl had learned a psalm, in which mention was made of roses; and, in speaking of roses, she thought of her own; and she sang it to the little boy, and he sang, too:

The roses will fade and pass away,
But we the Christ-child shall see one day.

And the little ones held each other by the hand, kissed the roses; looked at God's bright sunshine, and spoke to it, as if the Christ-child were there. What splendid summer days those were! How beautiful it was without, among the fresh rose-bushes, which seemed as if they would never leave off blooming!

Kay and Gerda sat and looked at the picture-book of beasts and birds. Then it was, while the clock was just striking twelve on the church tower, Kay said:

"Oh; something struck my heart and pricked me in the eye."

The little girl fell upon his neck; he blinked his eyes. No, there was nothing at all to be seen.

"I think it is gone," said he; but it was not gone. It was just one of those glass fragments which sprang from the mirror—the magic mirror that we remember well, the ugly glass that made everything great and good which was mirrored in it to seem small and mean, but in which the mean and the wicked things were brought out in relief, and every fault was noticeable at once. Poor little Kay had also received a splinter just in his heart, and that will now soon become like a lump of ice. It did not hurt him now, but the splinter was still there.

"Why do you cry?" he asked. "You look ugly like that. There's nothing the matter with me. Oh, fie!" he suddenly exclaimed, "that rose is worm-eaten, and this one is quite crooked. After all, they're ugly roses. They're like the box in which they stand."

And then he kicked the box with his foot, and tore both the roses off.

"Kay, what are you about?" cried the little girl.

And when he noticed her fright he tore off another rose, and then sprang in at his own window, away from pretty little Gerda.

When she afterward came with her picture-book, he said it was only fit for babies in arms; and when grandmother told stories he always came in with a *but*; and when he could manage it, he would get behind her, put on a pair of spectacles, and talk just as she did; he could do that very cleverly, and the people laughed at him. Soon he could mimic the speech and the gait of everybody in the street. Everything that was peculiar or ugly about him Kay could imitate; and people said, "That boy must certainly have a remarkable head." But it was the glass that stuck deep in his heart; so it

happened that he even teased little Gerda, who loved him with all her heart.

His games now became quite different from what they were before; they became quite sensible. One winter's day when it snowed he came out with a great burning-glass, held up the blue tail of his coat, and let the snow-flakes fall upon it.

"Now look at the glass, Gerda," said he.

And every flake of snow was magnified, and looked like a splendid flower, or a star with ten points: it was beautiful to behold.

"See how clever that is," said Kay. "That's much more interesting than real flowers; and there is not a single fault in it—they're quite regular until they begin to melt."

Soon after Kay came in thick gloves, and with his sledge upon his back. He called up to Gerda, "I've got leave to go into the great square, where the other boys play," and he was gone.

In the great square the boldest among the boys often tied their sledges to the country people's carts, and thus rode with them a good way. They went capitally. When they were in the midst of their playing there came a great sledge. It was painted quite white, and in it sat somebody wrapped in a rough white fur, and with a white rough cap on his head. The sledge drove twice round the square, and Kay bound his little sledge to it, and so he drove on with it. It went faster and faster, straight into the next street. The man who drove turned round and nodded in a friendly way to Kay; it was as if they knew one another: each time when Kay wanted to cast loose his little sledge, the stranger nodded again, and then Kay remained where he was, and thus

they drove out at the town gate. Then the snow began to fall so rapidly that the boy could not see a hand's-breadth before him, but still he drove on. Now he hastily dropped the cord, so as to get loose from the great sledge, but that was no use, for his sledge was fast bound to the other, and they went on like the wind. Then he called out quite loudly, but nobody heard him; and the snow beat down, and the sledge flew onward; every now and then it gave a jump, and they seemed to be flying over hedges and ditches. The boy was quite frightened. He wanted to say his prayer, but could remember nothing but the multiplication table.

The snowflakes became larger and larger; at last they looked like great white fowls. All at once they sprang aside and the great sledge stopped, and the person who had driven it rose up. The fur and the cap were made altogether of ice. It was a *lady*, tall and slender, and brilliantly white: it was the Snow Queen.

"We have driven well!" said she. "But why do you tremble with cold? Creep into my fur."

And she seated him beside her in her own sledge, and wrapped the fur round him, and he felt as if he sank into a snowdrift.

"Are you still cold?" asked she, and then she kissed him on the forehead.

Oh, that was colder than ice; it went quite through to his heart, half of which was already a lump of ice: he felt as if he were going to die; but only for a moment; for then he seemed quite well, and he did not notice the cold all about him.

"My sledge! don't forget my sledge."

That was the first thing he thought of; and it was

bound fast to one of the white chickens, and this chicken flew behind him with the sledge upon its back. The Snow Queen kissed Kay again, and then he had forgotten little Gerda, his grandmother, and all at home.

"Now you shall have no more kisses," said she, "for if you did I should kiss you to death."

Kay looked at her. She was so beautiful, he could not imagine a more sensible or lovely face; she did not appear to be made of ice now as before, when she sat at the window and beckoned to him. In his eyes she was perfect; he did not feel at all afraid. He told her that he could do mental arithmetic as far as fractions, that he knew the number of square miles, and the number of inhabitants in the country. And she always smiled, and then it seemed to him that what he knew was not enough, and he looked up into the wide sky, and she flew with him high up upon the black cloud, and the storm blew and whistled; it seemed as though the wind sang old songs. They flew over woods and lakes, over sea and land; below them roared the cold wind, the wolves howled, the snow crackled; over them flew the black screaming crows; but above all the moon shone bright and clear, and Kay looked at the long, long winter night; by day he slept at the feet of the Queen.

THIRD STORY

THE FLOWER GARDEN OF THE WOMAN WHO COULD CONJURE

BUT how did it fare with little Gerda when Kay did not return? What could have become of him? No

one knew, no one could give information. The boys only told that they had seen him bind his sledge to another very large one, which had driven along the street and out at the town gate. Nobody knew what had become of him; many tears were shed, and little Gerda especially wept long and bitterly: then she said he was dead—he had been drowned in the river which flowed close by their school. Oh, those were very dark long winter days! But now spring came, with warmer sunshine.

“Kay is dead and gone,” said little Gerda.

“I don’t believe it,” said the Sunshine.

“He is dead and gone,” said she to the Sparrows.

“We don’t believe it,” they replied; and at last little Gerda did not believe it herself.

“I will put on my new red shoes,” she said one morning, “those that Kay has never seen; and then I will go down to the river, and ask for him.”

It was still very early; she kissed the old grandmother, who was still asleep, put on her red shoes, and went quite alone out of the town gate toward the river.

“Is it true that you have taken away my little playmate from me? I will give you my red shoes if you will give him back to me!”

And it seemed to her as if the waves nodded quite strangely; and then she took her red shoes, that she liked best of anything she possessed, and threw them both into the river; but they fell close to the shore, and the little wavelets carried them back to her, to the land. It seemed as if the river would not take from her the dearest things she possessed because he had not her little Kay; but she thought she had not thrown the shoes far enough out; so she crept into a boat that lay

among the reeds; she went to the other end of the boat, and threw the shoes from thence into the water; but the boat was not bound fast, and at the movement she made it glided away from the shore. She noticed it, and hurried to get back, but before she reached the other end the boat was a yard from the bank, and it drifted away faster than before.

Then little Gerda was very much frightened, and began to cry; but no one heard her except the Sparrows, and they could not carry her to land; but they flew along by the shore, and sang, as if to console her, "Here we are! here we are!" The boat drove on with the stream, and little Gerda sat quite still, with only her stockings on her feet; her little red shoes floated along behind her, but they could not come up to the boat, for that made more way.

It was very pretty on both shores. There were beautiful flowers, old trees, and slopes with sheep and cows; but not *one* person was to be seen.

"Perhaps the river will carry me to little Kay," thought Gerda.

And then she became more cheerful, and rose up, and for many hours she watched the charming green banks; then she came to a great cherry orchard, in which stood a little house with remarkable blue and red windows; it had a thatched roof, and without stood two wooden soldiers, who presented arms to those who sailed past.

Gerda called to them, for she thought they were alive, but of course they did not answer. She came quite close to them; the river carried the boat toward the shore.

Gerda called still louder, and then there came out of the house an old woman leaning on a crutch: she had



“HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO COME ON THE GREAT
ROLLING RIVER?”

on a great velvet hat, painted over with the finest flowers.

"You poor little child!" said the old woman, "how did you manage to come on the great rolling river, and to float thus far out into the world?"

And then the old woman went quite into the water, seized the boat with her crutch-stick, drew it to land, and lifted little Gerda out. And Gerda was glad to be on dry land again, though she felt a little afraid of the strange old woman.

"Come and tell me who you are, and how you came here," said the old lady. And Gerda told her everything; and the old woman shook her head, and said, "Hem! hem!" And when Gerda had told her everything, and asked if she had not seen little Kay, the woman said that he had not yet come by, but that he probably would soon come. Gerda was not to be sorrowful, but to look at the flowers and taste the cherries, for they were better than any picture-book, for each one of them could tell a story. Then she took Gerda by the hand and led her into the little house, and the old woman locked the door.

The windows were very high, and the panes were red, blue, and yellow; the daylight shone in a remarkable way, with different colours. On the table stood the finest cherries, and Gerda ate as many of them as she liked, for she had leave to do so. While she was eating them, the old lady combed her hair with a golden comb, and the hair hung in ringlets of pretty yellow round the friendly little face, which looked as blooming as a rose.

"I have long wished for such a dear little girl as you," said the old lady. "Now you shall see how well we shall live with one another."

And as the ancient dame combed her hair, Gerda forgot her adopted brother Kay more and more; for this old woman could conjure, but she was not a wicked witch. She only practised a little magic for her own amusement, and wanted to keep little Gerda. Therefore she went into the garden, stretched out her crutch toward all the rose-bushes, and, beautiful as they were, they all sank into the earth, and one could not tell where they had stood. The old woman was afraid that if the little girl saw roses, she would think of her own, and remember little Kay, and run away.

Now Gerda was led out into the flower garden. What fragrance was there, and what loveliness! Every conceivable flower was there in full bloom; there was some for every season: no picture-book could be gayer and prettier. Gerda jumped high for joy, and played till the sun went down behind the high cherry-trees; then she was put into a lovely bed with red silk pillows stuffed with blue violets, and she slept there, and dreamed as gloriously as a Queen on her wedding-day.

One day she played again with the flowers in the warm sunshine; and thus many days went by. Gerda knew every flower; but, as many as there were of them, it still seemed to her as if one were wanting, but which one she did not know. One day she sat looking at the old lady's hat with the painted flowers, and the prettiest of them all was a rose. The old lady had forgotten to efface it from her hat when she caused the others to disappear. But so it always is when one does not keep one's wits about one.

"What, are there no roses here?" cried Gerda.

And she went among the beds, and searched and searched, but there was not one to be found. Then she

sat down and wept: her tears fell just upon a spot where a rosebud lay buried, and when the warm tears moistened the earth, the tree at once sprouted up as blooming as when it had sunk; and Gerda embraced it, and kissed the Roses, and thought of the beautiful roses at home, and also of little Kay.

"Oh, how I have been detained!" said the little girl. "I wanted to seek for little Kay! Do you not know where he is?" she asked the Roses. "Do you think he is dead?"

"He is not dead," the Roses answered. "We have been in the ground. All the dead people are there, but Kay is not there."

"Thank you," said little Gerda; and she went to the other flowers, looked into their cups, and asked, "Do you not know where little Kay is?"

But every flower stood in the sun thinking only of her own story or fancy tale: Gerda heard many, many of them; but not one knew anything of Kay.

And what did the Tiger-Lily say?

"Do you hear the drum 'Rub-dub'? There are only two notes, always 'rub-dub'! Hear the morning song of the women, hear the call of the priests. The Hindoo widow stands in her long red mantle on the funeral pile; the flames rise up around her and her dead husband; but the Hindoo woman is thinking of the living one here in the circle, of him whose eyes burn hotter than flames, whose fiery glances have burned in her soul more ardently than the flames themselves, which are soon to burn her body to ashes. Can the flame of the heart die in the flame of the funeral pile?"

"I don't understand that at all!" said little Gerda.

"That's my story," said the Lily.

What says the *Convolvulus*?

"Over the narrow road looms an old knightly castle: thickly the ivy grows over the crumbling red walls, leaf by leaf up to the balcony, and there stands a beautiful girl; she bends over the balustrade and glances up the road. No rose on its branch is fresher than she; no apple blossom wafted onward by the winds floats more lightly along. How her costly silks rustle! 'Comes he not yet?'"

"Is it Kay whom you mean?" asked little Gerda.

"I'm only speaking of a story—my dream," replied the *Convolvulus*.

What said the little *Snowdrop*?

"Between the trees a long board hangs by ropes; that is a swing. Two pretty little girls, with clothes white as snow and long green silk ribbons on their hats, are sitting upon it, swinging; their brother, who is greater than they, stands in the swing, and has slung his arm round the rope to hold himself, for in one hand he has a little saucer, and in the other a clay pipe; he is blowing bubbles. The swing flies, and the bubbles rise with beautiful changing colours; the last still hangs from the pipe-bowl, swaying in the wind. The swing flies on: the little black dog, light as the bubbles, stands up on his hind legs and wants to be taken into the swing; it flies on, and the dog falls, barks, and grows angry, for he is teased, and the bubble bursts. A swinging board and a bursting bubble—that is my song."

"It may be very pretty, what you're telling me, but you speak it so mournfully, and you don't mention little Kay at all."

What do the *Hyacinths* say?

"There were three beautiful sisters, transparent and delicate. The dress of one was red, that of the second blue, and that of the third quite white; hand in hand they danced by the calm lake in the bright moonlight. They were not elves, they were human beings. It was so sweet and fragrant there! The girls disappeared in the forest, and the sweet fragrance became stronger: three coffins, with the three beautiful maidens lying in them, glided from the wood-thicket across the lake; the glow-worms flew gleaming about them like little hovering lights. Are the dancing girls sleeping, or are they dead? The flower-scent says they are dead and the evening bell tolls their knell."

"You make me quite sorrowful," said little Gerda. "You smell so strongly, I cannot help thinking of the dead maidens. Ah! is little Kay really dead? The roses have been down in the earth, and they say no."

"Kling! klang!" tolled the Hyacinth Bells. "We are not tolling for little Kay—we don't know him; we only sing our song, the only one we know."

And Gerda went to the Buttercup, gleaming forth from the green leaves.

"You are a little bright sun," said Gerda. "Tell me, if you know, where I may find my companion."

And the Buttercup shone so gaily, and looked back at Gerda. What song might the Buttercup sing? It was not about Kay.

"In a little courtyard the clear sun shone warm on the first day of spring. The sunbeams glided down the white wall of the neighbouring house; close by grew the first yellow flower, glancing like gold in the bright sun's ray. The old grandmother sat out of doors in her chair; her granddaughter, a poor handsome maid-

servant, was coming home for a short visit: she kissed her grandmother. There was gold, heart's gold, in that blessed kiss, gold in the mouth, gold in the south, gold in the morning hour. See, that's my little story," said the Buttercup.

"My poor old grandmother!" sighed Gerda. "Yes, she is surely longing for me and grieving for me, just as she did for little Kay. But I shall go home and take Kay with me. There is no use in my asking the flowers, they only know their own song, and give me no information." And then she tied her little frock round her, that she might run the faster; but the Jonquil struck against her leg as she sprang over it, and she stopped to look at the tall yellow flower, and asked, "Do you, perhaps, know anything of little Kay?"

And she bent quite down to the flower, and what did it say?

"I can see myself! I can see myself!" said the Jonquil. "Oh! oh! how I smell! Up in the little room in the gable stands a little dancing girl: she stands sometimes on one foot, sometimes on both; she seems to tread on all the world. She's nothing but an ocular delusion: she pours water out of a teapot on a bit of stuff—it is her bodice. 'Cleanliness is a fine thing,' she says; her white frock hangs on a hook; it has been washed in the teapot too, and dried on the roof: she puts it on and ties her saffron handkerchief round her neck, and the dress looks all the whiter. Point your toes! Look how she seems to stand on a stalk. I can see myself! I can see myself!"

"I don't care at all about that," said Gerda. "You need not tell me that."

And then she ran to the end of the garden. The door

was locked, but she pressed against the rusty lock, and it broke off, the door sprang open, and little Gerda ran with naked feet out into the wide world. She looked back three times but no one was there to pursue her; at last she could run no longer, and seated herself on a great stone, and when she looked round the summer was over—it was late in autumn: one could not notice that in the beautiful garden, where there was always sunshine, and the flowers of every season always bloomed.

“Alas! how I have loitered!” said little Gerda. “Autumn has come. I may not rest again.”

And she rose up to go on. Oh! how sore and tired her little feet were. All around it looked cold and bleak; the long willow leaves were quite yellow, and the dew fell down like water; one leaf after another dropped; only the sloe-thorn still bore fruit, but the sloes were sour, and set the teeth on edge. Oh! how grey and gloomy it looked, the wide world!

FOURTH STORY

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS

GERDA was compelled to rest again; then there came hopping across the snow, just opposite the spot where she was sitting, a great Crow. This Crow stopped a long time to look at her, nodding its head—now it said, “Krah! krah! Good day! good day!” It could not pronounce better, but it felt friendly toward the little girl, and asked where she was going all alone in the wide world. The word “alone” Gerda understood very well,

and felt how much it expressed; and she told the Crow the whole story of her life and fortunes, and asked if it had not seen Kay.

And the Crow nodded very gravely, and said:

"That may be! that may be!"

"What, do you think so?" cried the little girl, and nearly pressed the Crow to death, she kissed it so.

"Gently, gently!" said the Crow. "I think I know: I believe it may be little Kay, but he has certainly forgotten you, with the Princess."

"Does he live with a Princess?" asked Gerda.

"Yes; listen," said the Crow. "But it's so difficult for me to speak your language. If you know the Crows' language, I can tell it much better."

"No, I never learned it," said Gerda: "but my grandmother understood it, and could speak the language too. I only wish I had learned it."

"That doesn't matter," said the Crow. "But it will go badly."

And then the Crow told what it knew.

"In the country in which we now are lives a Princess who is quite wonderfully clever, but then she has read all the newspapers in the world, and has forgotten them again, she is so clever. Lately she was sitting on the throne—and that's not so pleasant as is generally supposed—and she began to sing a song, and it was just this, 'Why should I not marry yet?' You see, there was something in that," said the Crow. "And so she wanted to marry, but she wished for a husband who could answer when he was spoken to, not one who only stood and looked handsome, for that was wearisome. And so she had all her maids of honour summoned, and when they heard her intention they were very glad.

‘I like that,’ said they; ‘I thought the very same thing the other day.’ You may be sure that every word I am telling you is true,” added the Crow. “I have a tame sweetheart who goes about freely in the castle, and she told me everything.”

Of course the sweetheart was a crow, for one crow always finds out another, and birds of a feather flock together.

“Newspapers were published directly, with a border of hearts and the Princess’s initials. One could read in them that every young man who was good-looking might come to the castle and speak with the Princess, and him who spoke so that one could hear he was at home there, and who spoke best, the Princess would choose for her husband. Yes, yes,” said the Crow, “you may believe me. It’s as true as I sit here. Young men came flocking in; there was a great crowding and much running to and fro, but no one succeeded the first or second day. They could all speak well when they were out in the streets, but when they entered at the palace gates, and saw the guards standing in their silver lace, and went up the staircase, and saw the lackeys in their golden liveries, and the great lighted halls, they became confused. And when they stood before the throne itself, on which the Princess sat, they could do nothing but repeat the last words she had spoken, and she did not care to hear her own words again. It was just as if the people in there had taken some narcotic and fallen asleep, till they got into the street again, for not till then were they able to speak. There stood a whole row of them, from the town gate to the palace gate. I went out myself to see it,” said the Crow. “They were hungry and thirsty, but in the palace they did not re-

ceive so much as a glass of lukewarm water. A few of the wisest had brought bread and butter with them, but they would not share with their neighbours, for they thought, 'Let him look hungry, and the Princess won't have him.' "

"But Kay, little Kay?" asked Gerda. "When did he come? Was he among the crowd?"

"Wait, wait! We're just coming to him. It was on the third day that there came a little personage, without horse or carriage, walking quite merrily up to the castle; his eyes sparkled like yours, he had fine long hair, but his clothes were shabby."

"That was Kay!" cried Gerda, rejoicingly. "Oh, then I have found him!" And she clapped her hands.

"He had a little knapsack on his back," observed the Crow.

"No, that must certainly have been his sledge," said Gerda, "for he went away with a sledge."

"That may well be," said the Crow, "for I did not look to it very closely. But this much I know from my tame sweetheart, that when he passed under the palace gate and saw the Life Guards in silver, and mounted the staircase and saw the lackeys in gold, he was not in the least embarrassed. He nodded, and said to them, 'It must be tedious work standing on the stairs—I'd rather go in.' The halls shone full of lights; privy councillors and Excellencies walked about with bare feet, and carried golden vessels; any one might have become solemn; and his boots creaked most noisily, but he was not embarrassed."

"That is certainly Kay!" cried Gerda. "He had new boots on; I've heard them creak in grandmother's room."

"Yes, certainly they creaked," resumed the Crow. "And he went boldly in to the Princess herself, who sat on a pearl that was as big as a spinning-wheel; and all the maids of honour with their attendants, and the attendants' attendants, and all the cavaliers with their followers, and the followers of their followers, who themselves kept a page apiece, were standing round; and the nearer they stood to the door, the prouder they looked. The followers' followers' pages, who always went in slippers, could hardly be looked at, so proudly did they stand in the doorway!"

"That must be terrible!" faltered little Gerda. "And yet Kay won the Princess?"

"If I had not been a crow, I would have married her myself, notwithstanding that I am engaged. They say he spoke as well as I can when I speak the crows' language; I heard that from my tame sweetheart. He was merry and agreeable; he had not come to marry, but only to hear the wisdom of the Princess; and he approved of her, and she of him."

"Yes, certainly that was Kay!" said Gerda. "He was so clever, he could do mental arithmetic up to fractions. Oh! won't you lead me to the castle too?"

"That's easily said," replied the Crow. "But how are we to manage it? I'll talk it over with my tame sweetheart; she can probably advise us; for this I must tell you—a little girl like yourself will never get leave to go completely in."

"Yes, I shall get leave," said Gerda. "When Kay hears that I'm there he'll come out directly, and bring me in."

"Wait for me yonder at the grating," said the Crow; and it wagged its head and flew away.

It was already late in the evening when the Crow came back.

"Rax! rax!" it said. "I'm to greet you kindly from my sweetheart, and here's a little loaf for you. She took it from the kitchen. There's plenty of bread there, and you must be hungry. You can't possibly get into the palace, for you are barefoot, and the guards in silver and the lackeys in gold would not allow it. But don't cry; you shall go up. My sweetheart knows a little back staircase that leads up to the bedroom, and she knows where she can get the key."

And they went into the garden, into the great avenue, where one leaf was falling down after another; and when the lights were extinguished in the palace one after the other, the Crow led Gerda to a back door, which stood ajar.

Oh, how Gerda's heart beat with fear and longing! It was just as if she had been going to do something wicked; and yet she only wanted to know if it was little Kay. Yes, it must be he. She thought so deeply of his clear eyes and his long hair, she could fancy she saw how he smiled as he had smiled at home when they sat among the roses. He would certainly be glad to see her; to hear what a long distance she had come for his sake; to know how sorry they had all been at home when he did not come back. Oh, what a fear and what a joy that was!

Now they were on the staircase. A little lamp was burning upon a cupboard, and in the middle of the floor stood the tame Crow turning her head on every side and looking at Gerda, who curtsied as her grandmother had taught her to do.

"My betrothed has spoken to me very favourably of you, my little lady," said the tame Crow. "Your history, as it may be called, is very moving. Will you take the lamp? Then I will precede you. We will go the straight way, and then we shall meet nobody."

"I feel as if some one were coming after us," said Gerda, as something rushed by her: it seemed like a shadow on the wall; horses with flying manes and thin legs, hunters, and ladies and gentlemen on horseback.

"These are only dreams," said the Crow; "they are coming to carry the high masters' thoughts out hunting. That's all the better, for you may look at them the more closely, in bed. But I hope, when you are taken into favour and get promotion, you will show a grateful heart."

"Of that we may be sure!" observed the Crow from the wood.

Now they came into the first hall: it was hung with rose-coloured satin, and the artificial flowers were worked on the walls; and here the dreams already came flitting by them, but they moved so quickly that Gerda could not see the high-born lords and ladies. Each hall was more splendid than the last; yes one could almost become bewildered! Now they were in the bedchamber. Here the ceiling was like a great palm-tree with leaves of glass, of costly glass, and in the middle of the floor two beds hung on a thick stalk of gold, and each of them looked like a lily. One of them was white, and in that lay the Princess; the other was red, and in that Gerda was to seek little Kay. She bent one of the red leaves aside, and then she saw a little brown neck. Oh, that was Kay! She called out his name quite loud, and held

the lamp toward him. The dreams rushed into the room again on horseback—he awoke, turned his head, and—it was not little Kay!

The Prince was only like him in the neck; but he was young and good-looking, and the Princess looked up, blinking, from the white lily, and asked who was there. Then little Gerda wept, and told her whole history, and all that the Crows had done for her.

"You poor child!" said the Prince and Princess.

And they praised the Crows, and said that they were not angry with them at all, but the Crows were not to do it again. However, they should be rewarded.

"Will you fly out free?" asked the Princess, "or will you have fixed positions as court crows, with the right to everything that is left in the kitchen?"

And the two Crows bowed, and begged for fixed positions, for they thought of their old age, and said, "It is so good to have some provisions for one's old days," as they called them.

And the Prince got up out of his bed, and let Gerda sleep in it, and he could not do more than that. She folded her little hands, and thought, "How good men and animals are!" and then she shut her eyes and went quietly to sleep. All the dreams came flying in again, looking like angels, and they drew a little sledge, on which Kay sat nodding; but all this was only a dream, and therefore it was gone again as soon as she awoke.

The next day she was clothed from head to foot in velvet; and an offer was made her that she should stay in the castle and enjoy pleasant times; but she only begged for a little carriage, with a horse to draw it, and a pair of little boots; then she would drive out into the world and seek for Kay.

And she received not only boots, but a muff likewise, and was neatly dressed; and when she was ready to depart a coach made of pure gold stopped before the door. Upon it shone like a star the coat of arms of the Prince and Princess; coachman, footmen, and outriders—for there were outriders too—sat on horseback with gold crowns on their heads. The Prince and the Princess themselves helped her into the carriage, and wished her all good fortune. The forest Crow, who was now married, accompanied her the first three miles; he sat by Gerda's side, for he could not bear riding backward: the other Crow stood in the doorway flapping her wings; she did not go with them, for she suffered from headache, that had come on since she had obtained a fixed position and was allowed to eat too much. The coach was lined with sugar-biscuits, and in the seat there were gingerbread-nuts and fruit.

"Farewell, farewell!" cried the Prince and Princess; and little Gerda wept, and the Crow wept. So they went on for the first three miles; and then the Crow said good-bye, and that was the heaviest parting of all. The Crow flew up on a tree, and beat his black wings as long as he could see the coach, which glittered like the bright sunshine.

FIFTH STORY

THE LITTLE ROBBER GIRL

THEY drove on through the thick forest, but the coach gleamed like a torch, that dazzled the robbers' eyes, and they could not bear it.

"That is gold! That is gold!" cried they, and rushed forward, and seized the horses, killed the postilions, the coachman, and the footmen, and then pulled little Gerda out of the carriage.

"She is fat—she is pretty—she is fed with nut-kernels!" said the old robber woman, who had a very long matted beard, and shaggy eyebrows that hung down over her eyes. "She's as good as a little pet lamb; how I shall relish her!"

And she drew out her shining knife, that gleamed in a horrible way.

"Oh!" screamed the old woman at the very same moment; for her own daughter who hung at her back bit her ear in a very naughty and spiteful manner. "You ugly brat!" screamed the old woman; and she had not time to kill Gerda.

"She shall play with me!" said the little robber girl. "She shall give me her muff and her pretty dress, and sleep with me in my bed!"

And then the girl gave another bite, so that the woman jumped high up, and turned right round, and all the robbers laughed, and said:

"Look how she dances with her calf."

"I want to go into the carriage," said the little robber girl.

And she would have her own way, for she was spoiled, and very obstinate; and she and Gerda sat in the carriage, and drove over stock and stone deep into the forest. The little robber girl was as big as Gerda, but stronger and more broad-shouldered; and she had a brown skin; her eyes were quite black, and they looked almost mournful. She clasped little Gerda round the waist, and said:

"They shall not kill you as long as I am not angry with you. I suppose you are a Princess?"

"No," replied Gerda. And she told all that had happened to her, and how fond she was of little Kay.

The robber girl looked at her seriously, nodded slightly, and said:

"They shall not kill you even if I do get angry with you, for then I will do it myself."

And then she dried Gerda's eyes, and put her two hands into the beautiful muff that was so soft and warm.

Now the coach stopped, and they were in the courtyard of a robber castle. It had burst from the top to the ground; ravens and crows flew out of the great holes, and big bulldogs—each of which looked as if he could devour a man—jumped high up, but they did not bark, for that was forbidden.

In the great old smoky hall, a bright fire burned upon the stone floor; the smoke passed along under the ceiling, and had to seek an exit for itself. A great cauldron of soup was boiling and hares and rabbits were roasting on the spit.

"You shall sleep to-night with me and all my little animals," said the robber girl.

They got something to eat and drink, and then went to a corner, where straw and carpets were spread out. Above these sat on laths and perches more than a hundred pigeons, that all seemed asleep, but they turned a little when the two little girls came.

"All these belong to me," said the little robber girl; and she quickly seized one of the nearest, held it by the feet, and shook it so that it flapped its wings. "Kiss it!" she cried, and beat it in Gerda's face. "There sit the wood rascals," she continued, pointing

to a number of laths that had been nailed in front of a hole in the wall. "Those are wood rascals, those two; they fly away directly if one does not keep them well locked up. And here's my old sweetheart 'Ba.'" And she pulled out by a horn a Reindeer, that was tied up, and had a polished copper ring round its neck. "We're obliged to keep him tight too, or he'd run away from us. Every evening I tickle his neck with a sharp knife, and he's very frightened at that."

And the little girl drew a long knife from a cleft in the wall, and let it glide over the Reindeer's neck; the poor creature kicked out its legs, and the little robber girl laughed, and drew Gerda into bed with her.

"Do you keep the knife while you're asleep?" asked Gerda, and looked at it in rather a frightened way.

"I always sleep with my knife," replied the robber girl. "One does not know what may happen. But now tell me again what you told me just now about little Kay, and why you came out into the wide world."

And Gerda told it again from the beginning; and the Wood Pigeons cooed above them in their cage, and the other pigeons slept. The little robber girl put her arm round Gerda's neck, held her knife in the other hand, and slept so that one could hear her; but Gerda could not close her eyes at all—she did not know whether she was to live or die.

The robbers sat round the fire, sang and drank, and the old robber woman tumbled about. It was quite terrible for a little girl to behold.

Then the Wood Pigeons said, "Coo! coo! we have seen little Kay. A white owl was carrying his sledge. He sat in the Snow Queen's carriage, which drove close

by the forest as we lay in our nests. She blew upon us young pigeons, and all died except us two. 'Coo! coo!'

"What are you saying there?" asked Gerda. "Whither was the Snow Queen travelling? Do you know anything about it?"

"She was probably journeying to Lapland, for there they have always ice and snow. Ask the Reindeer that is tied to the cord."

"There is snow and ice yonder, and it is glorious and fine," said the Reindeer. "There one may run about free in great glittering plains. There the Snow Queen has her summer tent; but her strong castle is up toward the North Pole, on the island that's called Spitzbergen."

"Oh, Kay, little Kay!" cried Gerda.

"You must lie still," exclaimed the robber girl, "or I shall thrust my knife into your body."

In the morning Gerda told her all that the Wood Pigeons had said, and the robber girl looked quite serious, and nodded her head and said:

"That's all the same, that's all the same!"

"Do you know where Lapland is?" she asked the Reindeer.

"Who should know better than I?" the creature replied, and its eyes sparkled in its head. "I was born and bred there; I ran about there in the snow fields."

"Listen!" said the robber girl to Gerda. "You see all our men have gone away. Only mother is here still, and she'll stay; but toward noon she drinks out of the big bottle, and then she sleeps for a little while; then I'll do something for you."

Then she sprang out of bed, and clasped her mother round the neck and pulled her beard, crying:

"Good morning, my old nanny-goat." And her mother filliped her nose till it was red and blue; and it was all done for pure love.

When the mother had drunk out of her bottle and had gone to sleep upon it, the robber girl went to the Reindeer, and said:

"I should like very much to tickle you a few times more with the knife, for you are very funny then; but it's all the same. I'll loosen your cord and help you out, so that you may run to Lapland; but you must use your legs well, and carry this little girl to the palace of the Snow Queen, where her playfellow is. You've heard what she told me, for she spoke loud enough, and you were listening."

The Reindeer sprang up high for joy. The robber girl lifted little Gerda on its back, and had the forethought to tie her fast, and even to give her her own little cushion as a saddle.

"There are your fur boots for you," she said, "for it's growing cold; but I shall keep the muff, for that's so very pretty. Still, you shall not be cold, for all that: here's my mother's big mufflers—they'll just reach up to your elbows. Now you look just like my ugly mother."

And Gerda wept for joy.

"I can't bear to see you whimper," said the little robber girl. "No, you just ought to look very glad. And here are two loaves and a ham for you; now you won't be hungry."

These were tied on the Reindeer's back. The little robber girl opened the door, coaxed in all the big dogs, and then cut the rope with her sharp knife, and said to the Reindeer:

"Now run, but take good care of the little girl."

And Gerda stretched out her hands with the big mufflers toward the little robber girl, and said: "Farewell!"

And the Reindeer ran over rock and stone, away through the great forest, over marshes and steppes, as quick as it could go. The wolves howled and the ravens croaked. "Hiss! hiss!" it went in the air. It seemed as if the sky were flashing fire.

"Those are my old Northern Lights," said the Reindeer. "Look how they glow!" And then it ran on faster than ever, day and night.

SIXTH STORY

THE LAPLAND WOMAN AND THE FINLAND WOMAN

At a little hut they stopped. It was very humble; the roof sloped down almost to the ground, and the door was so low that the family had to creep on their stomachs when they wanted to go in or out. No one was in the house but an old Lapland woman, cooking fish by the light of a train-oil lamp; and the Reindeer told Gerda's whole history, but it related its own first, for this seemed to the Reindeer the more important of the two. Gerda was so exhausted by the cold that she could not speak.

"Oh, you poor things," said the Lapland woman, "you've a long way to run yet! You must go more than a hundred miles into Finmark, for the Snow Queen is there, staying in the country, and burning the Bengal

lights every evening. I'll write a few words on a dry cod, for I have no paper, and I'll give you that as a letter to the Finland woman; she can give you better information than I."

And when little Gerda had been warmed and refreshed with food and drink, the Lapland woman wrote a few words on a dried codfish, and telling Gerda to take care of these, tied her again on the Reindeer, and the Reindeer sprang away. Flash! flash! it went high in the air; the whole night long the most beautiful blue Northern Lights were burning.

And then they got to Finmark, and knocked at the chimney of the Finland woman, for she had not even a hut.

There was such a heat in the chimney that the woman herself went about almost naked. She at once loosened little Gerda's dress and took off the child's mufflers and boots; otherwise it would have been too hot for her to bear. Then she laid a piece of ice on the Reindeer's head, and read what was written on the codfish; she read it three times, and when she knew it by heart, she popped the fish into the soup-cauldron, for it was eatable, and she never wasted anything.

Now the Reindeer first told his own little history, and then little Gerda's; and the Finland woman blinked with her clever eyes, but said nothing.

"You are very clever," said the Reindeer: "I know you can tie all the winds of the world together with a bit of twine: if the seaman unties one knot, he has a good wind; if he loosens the second, it blows hard; but if he unties the third and the fourth, there comes such a tempest that the forests are thrown down. Won't you give the little girl a draught, so that she may get

twelve men's power, and overcome the Snow Queen?"

"Twelve men's power!" repeated the Finland woman. "Great use that would be!"

And she went to a bed, and brought out a great rolled-up fur, and unrolled it; wonderful characters were written upon it, and the Finland woman read until the water ran down over her forehead.

But the Reindeer again begged so hard for little Gerda, and Gerda looked at the Finland woman with such beseeching eyes full of tears, that she began to blink again with her own, and drew the Reindeer into a corner, and whispered to him, while she laid fresh ice upon his head:

"Little Kay is certainly at the Snow Queen's, and finds everything there to his taste and liking, and thinks it the best place in the world; but that is because he has a splinter of glass in his eye, and a little fragment in his heart; but these must be got out, or he will never be a human being again, and the Snow Queen will keep her power over him."

"But cannot you give something to little Gerda, so as to give her power over all this?"

"I can give her no greater power than she possesses already: don't you see how great that is? Don't you see how men and animals are obliged to serve her, and how she gets on so well in the world, with her naked feet? She cannot receive her power from us: it consists in this, that she is a dear innocent child. If she herself cannot penetrate to the Snow Queen and get the glass out of little Kay, we can be of no use! Two miles from here the Snow Queen's garden begins; you can carry the little girl thither: set her down by the great bush that stands with its red berries in the snow.

Don't stand gossiping, but make haste, and get back here!"

And the Finland woman lifted little Gerda on the Reindeer, which ran as fast as it could.

"Oh, I haven't my boots! I haven't my mufflers!" cried Gerda.

She soon noticed that in the cutting cold; but the Reindeer dare not stop: it ran till it came to the bush with the red berries; there it set Gerda down, and kissed her on the mouth, and great bright tears ran over the creature's cheeks; and then it ran back, as fast as it could. There stood poor Gerda without shoes, without gloves, in the midst of the terrible cold Finmark.

She ran forward as fast as possible; then came a whole regiment of snowflakes; but they did not fall down from the sky, for that was quite bright, and shone with the Northern Lights: the snowflakes ran along the ground, and the nearer they came the larger they grew. Gerda still remembered how large and beautiful the snowflakes had appeared when she looked at them through the burning-glass. But here they were certainly far longer and much more terrible—they were alive. They were the advanced posts of the Snow Queen, and had the strangest shapes. A few looked like ugly great porcupines; others like knots formed of snakes, which stretched forth their heads; and others like little fat bears, whose hair stood on end: all were brilliantly white, all were living snowflakes.

Then little Gerda said her prayer; and the cold was so great that she could see her own breath, which went forth out of her mouth like smoke. The breath became thicker and thicker, and formed itself into little angels, who grew and grew whenever they touched the earth;

and all had helmets on their heads and shields and spears in their hands; their number increased more and more, and when Gerda had finished her prayer a whole legion stood round about her, and struck with their spears at the terrible snowflakes, so that these were shattered into a thousand pieces; and little Gerda could go forward afresh, with good courage. The angels stroked her hands and feet, and then she felt less how cold it was, and hastened on to the Snow Queen's palace.

But now we must see what Kay is doing. He certainly was not thinking of little Gerda, and least of all that she was standing in front of the palace.

SEVENTH STORY

OF THE SNOW QUEEN'S CASTLE AND WHAT HAPPENED THERE AT LAST

THE walls of the palace were formed of the drifting snow, and the windows and doors of the cutting winds. There were more than a hundred halls, all blown together by the snow: the greatest of these extended for several miles; the strong Northern Lights illumined them all, and how great and empty, how icily cold and shining they all were! Never was merriment there, not even a little bear's ball, at which the storm could have played the music, while the bears walked about on their hind legs and showed off their pretty manners; never any little sport of mouth-slapping or bars-touch; never any little coffee gossip among the young lady white foxes. Empty, vast, and cold were the halls of the

Snow Queen. The Northern Lights flamed so brightly that one could count them where they stood highest and lowest. In the midst of this immense empty snow hall was a frozen lake, which had burst into a thousand pieces; but each piece was like the rest, so that it was a perfect work of art; and in the middle of the lake sat the Snow Queen when she was at home, and then she said that she sat in the mirror of reason, and that this was the only one, and the best in the world.

Little Kay was quite blue with cold—indeed, almost black; but he did not notice it, for she had kissed the cold shudderings away from him, and his heart was like a lump of ice. He dragged a few sharp flat pieces of ice to and fro, joining them together in all kinds of ways, for he wanted to achieve something with them. It was just like when we have little tablets of wood, and lay them together to form figures—what we call the Chinese game. Kay also went and laid figures, and, indeed, very artistic ones. That was the icy game of reason. In his eyes these figures were very remarkable and of the highest importance; that was because of the fragment of glass sticking in his eye. He laid out the figures so that they formed a word—but he could never manage to lay down the word as he wished to have it—the word ‘Eternity.’ And the Snow Queen had said:

“If you can find out this figure, you shall be your own master, and I will give you the whole world and a new pair of skates.”

But he could not.

“Now I’ll hasten away to the warm lands,” said the Snow Queen. “I will go and look into the black pots”: these were the volcanoes, Etna and Vesuvius, as they

are called. "I shall make them a little white! That's necessary; that will do the grapes and lemons good."

And the Snow Queen flew away, and Kay sat quite alone in the great icy hall that was miles in extent, and looked at his pieces of ice, and thought so deeply that cracks were heard inside him: one would have thought that he was frozen.

Then it happened that little Gerda stepped through the great gate into the wide hall. Here reigned cutting winds, but she prayed a prayer, and the winds lay down as if they would have gone to sleep; and she stepped into the great empty cold halls, and beheld Kay: she knew him, and flew to him and embraced him, and held him fast, and called out:

"Kay, dear little Kay! at last I have found you!"

But he sat quite still, stiff and cold. Then little Gerda wept hot tears, that fell upon his breast; they penetrated into his heart, they thawed the lump of ice, and consumed the little piece of glass in it. He looked at her, and she sang:

Roses bloom and roses decay,
But we the Christ-child shall see one day.

Then Kay burst into tears; he wept so that the splinter of glass came out of his eye. Now he recognized her, and cried rejoicingly:

"Gerda, dear Gerda! where have you been all this time? And where have I been?" And he looked all around him. "How cold it is here! How large and void!"

And he clung to Gerda, and she laughed and wept for joy. It was so glorious that even the pieces of ice

round about danced for joy; and when they were tired and lay down, they formed themselves into just the letters of which the Snow Queen had said that if he found them out he should be his own master, and she would give him the whole world and a new pair of skates.

And Gerda kissed his cheeks, and they became blooming; she kissed his eyes, and they shone like her own; she kissed his hands and feet, and he became well and merry. The Snow Queen might now come home; his letter of release stood written in shining characters of ice.

And they took one another by the hand, and wandered forth from the great palace of ice. They spoke of the grandmother, and of the roses on the roof; and where they went the winds rested and the sun burst forth; and when they came to the bush with the red berries, the Reindeer was standing there waiting: it had brought another young reindeer, which gave the children warm milk, and kissed them on the mouth. Then they carried Kay and Gerda, first to the Finnish woman, where they warmed themselves thoroughly in the hot room, and received instructions for their journey home, and then to the Lapland woman, who had made their new clothes and put their sledge in order.

The Reindeer and the young one sprang at their side, and followed them as far as the boundary of the country. There the first green sprouted forth, and there they took leave of the two reindeer and the Lapland woman. "Farewell!" said all. And the first little birds began to twitter, the forest was decked with green buds, and out of it on a beautiful horse (which Gerda knew, for it was the same that had drawn her golden

coach) a young girl came riding, with a shining red cap on her head and a pair of pistols in the holsters. This was the little robber girl, who had grown tired of staying at home, and wished to go first to the north, and if that did not suit her, to some other region. She knew Gerda at once, and Gerda knew her too; and it was a right merry meeting.

"You are a fine fellow to gad about!" she said to little Kay. "I should like to know if you deserve that one should run to the end of the world after you?"

But Gerda patted her cheeks, and asked after the Prince and Princess.

"They've gone to foreign countries," said the robber girl.

"But the Crow?" said Gerda.

"Why, the Crow is dead," answered the other. "The tame one has become a widow, and goes about with an end of black worsted thread round her leg. She complains most lamentably, but it's all talk. But now tell me how you have fared, and how you caught him."

And Gerda and Kay told their story.

"Snipp-snapp-snurre-purre-base-llurre!" said the robber girl.

And she took them both by the hand, and promised that if she ever came through their town, she would come up and pay them a visit. And then she rode away into the wide world. But Gerda and Kay went hand in hand, and as they went it became beautiful spring, with green and with flowers. The church bells sounded, and they recognized the high steeples and the great town: it was the one in which they lived; and they went to the grandmother's door, and up the stairs, and into the room, where everything remained in its usual

place. The big clock was going "Tick! tack!" and the hands were turning; but as they went through the rooms they noticed that they had become grown-up people. The roses out on the roof gutter were blooming in at the open window, and there stood the little children's chairs, and Kay and Gerda sat each upon their own, and held each other by the hand. They had forgotten the cold empty splendour at the Snow Queen's like a heavy dream. The grandmother was sitting in God's bright sunshine, and read aloud out of the Bible, "Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God."

And Kay and Gerda looked into each other's eyes, and all at once they understood the old song:

Roses bloom and roses decay,
But we the Christ-child shall see one day.

There they both sat, grown up, and yet children—children in heart—and it was summer, warm and delightful summer.

THE NIGHTINGALE

IN China, you must know, the Emperor is a Chinaman, and all whom he has about him are Chinamen too. It happened a good many years ago, but that's just why it's worth while to hear the story, before it is forgotten. The Emperor's palace was the most splendid in the world; it was made entirely of porcelain, very costly, but so delicate and brittle that one had to take care how one touched it. In the garden were to be seen the most wonderful flowers, and to the costliest of them silver bells were tied, which sounded, so that nobody should pass by without noticing the flowers. Yes, everything in the Emperor's garden was admirably arranged. And it extended so far that the gardener himself did not know where the end was. If a man went on and on, he came into a glorious forest with high trees and deep lakes. The wood extended straight down to the sea, which was blue and deep; great ships could sail beneath the branches of the trees; and in the trees lived a Nightingale, which sang so splendidly that even the poor fisherman, who had many other things to do, stopped still and listened, when he had gone out at night to throw out his nets, and heard the Nightingale.

"How beautiful that is!" he said; but he was obliged to attend to his property, and thus forgot the bird. But when in the next night the bird sang again, and the fisherman heard it, he exclaimed again, "How beautiful that is!"

From all the countries of the world travellers came to the city of the Emperor, and admired it, and the palace, and the garden, but when they heard the Nightingale, they said, "That is the best of all!"

And the travellers told of it when they came home; and the learned men wrote many books about the town, the palace, and the garden. But they did not forget the Nightingale; that was placed highest of all; and those who were poets wrote most magnificent poems about the Nightingale in the wood by the deep lake.

The books went through all the world, and a few of them once came to the Emperor. He sat in his golden chair, and read, and read: every moment he nodded his head, for it pleased him to peruse the masterly descriptions of the city, the palace and the garden. "But the Nightingale is the best of all," it stood written there.

"What's that?" exclaimed the Emperor. "I don't know the Nightingale at all! Is there such a bird in my empire, and even in my garden? I've never heard of that. To think that I should have to learn such a thing for the first time from books!"

And hereupon he called his cavalier. This cavalier was so grand that if any one lower in rank than himself dared to speak to him, or to ask him any question, he answered nothing but "P!"—and that meant nothing.

"There is said to be a wonderful bird here called a Nightingale!" said the Emperor. "They say it is the best thing in all my great empire. Why have I never heard anything about it?"

"I have never heard him named," replied the cavalier. "He has never been introduced at Court."

"I command that he shall appear this evening, and sing before me," said the Emperor. "All the world

knows what I possess, and I do not know it myself!"

"I have never heard him mentioned," said the cavalier.
"I will seek for him. I will find him."

But where was he to be found? The cavalier ran up and down all staircases, through halls and passages, but no one among all those whom he met had heard talk of the Nightingale. And the cavalier ran back to the Emperor, and said that it must be a fable invented by the writers of books.

"Your Imperial Majesty cannot believe how much is written that is fiction, besides something that they call the black art."

"But the book in which I read this," said the Emperor, "was sent to me by the high and mighty Emperor of Japan, and therefore it cannot be a falsehood. I will hear the Nightingale! It must be here this evening! It has my imperial favour; and if it does not come, all the Court shall be trampled upon after the Court has supped!"

"Tsing-pe!" said the cavalier; and again he ran up and down all the staircases, and through all the halls and corridors; and half the Court ran with him, for the courtiers did not like being trampled upon.

Then there was a great inquiry after the wonderful Nightingale, which all the world knew excepting the people at Court.

At last they met with a poor little girl in the kitchen, who said:

"The Nightingale? I know it well; yes, it can sing gloriously. Every evening I get leave to carry my poor sick mother the scraps from the table. She lives down by the strand, and when I get back and am tired, and rest in the wood, then I hear the Nightingale sing.

And then the water comes into my eyes, and it is just as if my mother kissed me!"

"Little kitchen-girl," said the cavalier, "I will get you a place in the kitchen, with permission to see the Emperor dine, if you will lead us to the Nightingale, for it is announced for this evening."

So they all went out in the wood where the Nightingale was accustomed to sing; half the Court went forth. When they were in the midst of their journey a cow began to low.

"Oh!" cried the Court pages, "now we have it! That shows a wonderful power in so small a creature! I have certainly heard it before."

"No, those are cows lowing!" said the little kitchen-girl. "We are a long way from the place yet."

Now the frogs began to croak in the marsh.

"Glorious!" said the Chinese Court preacher. "Now I hear it—it sounds just like little church bells."

"No, those are frogs!" said the little kitchen-maid. "But now I think we shall soon hear it."

And then the Nightingale began to sing.

"That is it!" exclaimed the little girl. "Listen, listen! And yonder it sits."

And she pointed to a little grey bird up in the boughs.

"Is it possible?" cried the cavalier. "I should never have thought it looked like that! How simple it looks! It must certainly have lost its colour at seeing such grand people around."

"Little Nightingale!" called the little kitchen-maid, quite loudly, "our gracious Emperor wishes you to sing before him."

"With the greatest pleasure!" replied the Nightingale, and began to sing most delightfully.

"It sounds just like glass bells!" said the cavalier. "And look at its little throat, how it's working! It's wonderful that we should never have heard it before. That bird will be a great success at Court."

"Shall I sing once more before the Emperor?" asked the Nightingale, for it thought the Emperor was present.

"My excellent little Nightingale," said the cavalier, "I have great pleasure in inviting you to a Court festival this evening, when you shall charm his Imperial Majesty with your beautiful singing."

"My song sounds best in the green wood!" replied the Nightingale; still it came willingly when it heard what the Emperor wished.

The palace was festively adorned. The walls and the flooring, which were of porcelain, gleamed in the rays of thousands of golden lamps. The most glorious flowers, which could ring clearly, had been placed in the passages. There was a running to and fro, and a thorough draught, and all the bells rang so loudly that one could not hear oneself speak.

In the midst of the great hall, where the Emperor sat, a golden perch had been placed, on which the Nightingale was to sit. The whole Court was there, and the little cook-maid had got leave to stand behind the door, as she had now received the title of a real Court cook. All were in full dress, and all looked at the little grey bird, to which the Emperor nodded.

And the Nightingale sang so gloriously that the tears came into the Emperor's eyes, and the tears ran down over his cheeks; and then the Nightingale sang still more sweetly, that went straight to the heart. The Emperor was so much pleased that he said the Night-

ingale should have his golden slipper to wear round its neck. But the Nightingale declined this with thanks, saying it had already received a sufficient reward.

"I have seen tears in the Emperor's eyes—that is the real treasure to me. An Emperor's tears have a peculiar power. I am rewarded enough!" And then it sang again with a sweet glorious voice.

"That's the most amiable coquetry I ever saw!" said the ladies who stood round about, and then they took water in their mouths to gurgle when any one spoke to them. They thought they should be nightingales too. And the lackeys and chamber-maids reported that they were satisfied too; and that was saying a good deal, for they are the most difficult to please. In short, the Nightingale achieved a real success.

It was now to remain at Court, to have its own cage with liberty to go out twice every day and once at night. Twelve servants were appointed when the Nightingale went out, each of whom had a silken string fastened to the bird's leg, and which they held very tight. There was really no pleasure in an excursion of that kind.

The whole city spoke of the wonderful bird, and when two people met, one said nothing but "Nigh^{tin}," and the other said "gale"; and then they sighed, and understood one another. Eleven pedlars' children were named after the bird, but not one of them could sing a note.

One day the Emperor received a large parcel, on which was written "The Nightingale."

"There we have a new book about this celebrated bird," said the Emperor.

But it was not a book, but a little work of art contained in a box, an artificial nightingale, which was to

sing like a natural one, and was brilliantly ornamented with diamonds, rubies, and sapphires. So soon as the artificial bird was wound up, he could sing one of the pieces that he really sang, and then his tail moved up and down, and shone with silver and gold. Round his neck hung a little ribbon, and on that was written, "The Emperor of China's nightingale is poor compared to that of the Emperor of Japan."

"That is capital!" said they all, and he who had brought the artificial bird immediately received the title, Imperial Head-Nightingale-Bringer.

"Now they must sing together; what a duet that will be!"

And so they had to sing together; but it did not sound very well, for the real Nightingale sang in its own way, and the artificial bird sang waltzes.

"That's not his fault," said the playmaster; "he's quite perfect, and very much in my style."

Now the artificial bird was to sing alone. He had just as much success as the real one, and then it was much handsomer to look at—it shone like bracelets and breastpins.

Three and thirty times over did it sing the same piece, and yet was not tired. The people would gladly have heard it again, but the Emperor said that the living Nightingale ought to sing something now. But where was it? No one had noticed that it had flown away out of the open window, back to the green wood.

"But what is become of that?" said the Emperor.

And all the courtiers abused the Nightingale, and declared that it was a very ungrateful creature.

"We have the best bird, after all," said they.

And so the artificial bird had to sing again, and that

was the thirty-fourth time that they listened to the same piece. For all that they did not know it quite by heart, for it was so very difficult. And the playmaster praised the bird particularly; yes, he declared that it was better than a nightingale, not only with regard to its plumage and the many beautiful diamonds, but inside as well.

"For you see, ladies and gentlemen, and above all, your Imperial Majesty, with a real nightingale one can never calculate what is coming, but in this artificial bird everything is settled. One can explain it; one can open it and make people understand where the waltzes come from, how they go, and how one follows up another."

"Those are quite our own ideas," they all said.

And the speaker received permission to show the bird to the people on the next Sunday. The people were to hear it sing too, the Emperor commanded; and they did hear it, and were as much pleased as if they had all got tipsy upon tea, for that's quite the Chinese fashion; and they all said, "Oh!" and held up their forefingers and nodded. But the poor fisherman, who had heard the real Nightingale, said:

"It sounds pretty enough, and the melodies resemble each other, but there's something wanting, though I know not what!"

The real Nightingale was banished from the country and empire. The artificial bird had its place on a silken cushion close to the Emperor's bed; all the presents it had received, gold and precious stones, were ranged about it; in title it had advanced to be the High Imperial After-Dinner-Singer, and in rank to number one on the left hand; for the Emperor considered that side the most important on which the heart is placed, and even in an Emperor the heart is on the left side; and the

playmaster wrote a work of five and twenty volumes about the artificial bird; it was very learned and very long, full of the most difficult Chinese words; but yet all the people declared that they had read it and understood it, for fear of being considered stupid, and having their bodies trampled on.

So a whole year went by. The Emperor, the Court, and all the other Chinese knew every little twitter in the artificial bird's song by heart. But just for that reason it pleased them best—they could sing with it themselves, and they did so. The street boys sang, "Tsi-tsi-tsi-glug-glug!" and the Emperor himself sang it too. Yes, that was certainly famous.

But one evening, when the artificial bird was singing its best, and the Emperor lay in bed listening to it, something inside the bird said, "Whizz!" Something cracked. "Whir-r-r!" All the wheels ran round, and then the music stopped.

The Emperor immediately sprang out of bed, and caused his body physician to be called; but what could *he* do? Then they sent for a watchmaker, and after a good deal of talking and investigation, the bird was put into something like order; but the watchmaker said that the bird must be carefully treated, for the barrels were worn, and it would be impossible to put new ones in in such a manner that the music would go. There was a great lamentation; only once in a year was it permitted to let the bird sing, and that was almost too much. But then the playmaster made a little speech, full of heavy words, and said this was just as good as before—and so of course it was as good as before.

Now five years had gone by, and a real grief came upon the whole nation. The Chinese were really fond

of their Emperor, and now he was ill, and could not, it was said, live much longer. Already a new Emperor had been chosen, and the people stood out in the street and asked the cavalier how their old Emperor did.

"P!" said he, and shook his head.

Cold and pale lay the Emperor in his great gorgeous bed; the whole Court thought him dead, and each one ran to pay homage to the new ruler. The chamberlains ran out to talk it over, and the ladies' maids had a great coffee-party. All about, in all the halls and passages, cloth had been laid down so that no footstep could be heard, and therefore it was quiet there, quite quiet. But the Emperor was not dead yet: stiff and pale he lay on the gorgeous bed with the long velvet curtains and the heavy gold tassels; high up, a window stood open, and the moon shone in upon the Emperor and the artificial bird.

The poor Emperor could scarcely breathe; it was just as if something lay upon his chest: he opened his eyes, and then he saw that it was Death who sat upon his chest, and had put on his golden crown, and held in one hand the Emperor's sword, and in the other his beautiful banner. And all around, from among the folds of the splendid velvet curtains, strange heads peered forth; a few very ugly, the rest quite lovely and mild. These were all the Emperor's bad and good deeds, that stood before him now that Death sat upon his heart.

"Do you remember this?" whispered one to the other, "Do you remember that?" and then they told him so much that the perspiration ran from his forehead.

"I did not know that!" said the Emperor. "Music!

music! the great Chinese drum!" he cried, "so that I need not hear all they say!"

And they continued speaking, and Death nodded like a Chinaman to all they said.

"Music! music!" cried the Emperor. "You little precious golden bird, sing, sing! I have given you gold and costly presents; I have even hung my golden slipper around your neck—sing now, sing!"

But the bird stood still; no one was there to wind him up, and he could not sing without that; but Death continued to stare at the Emperor with his great hollow eyes, and it was quiet, fearfully quiet.

Then there sounded from the window, suddenly, the most lovely song. It was the little live Nightingale, that sat outside on a spray. It had heard of the Emperor's sad plight, and had come to sing to him of comfort and hope. And as it sang the spectres grew paler and paler; the blood ran quicker and more quickly through the Emperor's weak limbs; and even Death listened, and said:

"Go on, little Nightingale, go on!"

"But will you give me that splendid golden sword? Will you give me that rich banner? Will you give me the Emperor's crown?"

And Death gave up each of these treasures for a song. And the Nightingale sang on and on; and it sang of the quiet churchyard where the white roses grow, where the elder blossom smells sweet, and where the fresh grass is moistened by the tears of the survivors. Then Death felt a longing to see his garden, and floated out at the window in the form of a cold white mist.

"Thanks! thanks!" said the Emperor. "You heav-

only little bird! I know you well. I banished you from my country and empire, and yet you have charmed away the evil faces from my couch, and banished Death from my heart! How can I reward you?"

"You have rewarded me!" replied the Nightingale. "I have drawn tears from your eyes, when I sang the first time—I shall never forget that. Those are the jewels that rejoice a singer's heart. But now sleep and grow fresh and strong again. I will sing you something."

And it sang, and the Emperor fell into a sweet slumber. Ah! how mild and refreshing that sleep was! The sun shone upon him through the windows, when he awoke refreshed and restored: not one of his servants had yet returned, for they all thought he was dead; only the Nightingale still sat beside him and sang.

"You must always stay with me," said the Emperor. "You shall sing as you please; and I shall break the artificial bird into a thousand pieces."

"Not so," replied the Nightingale. "It did well as long as it could; keep it as you have done till now. I cannot build my nest in the palace to dwell in it, but let me come when I feel the wish; then I will sit in the evening on the spray yonder by the window, and sing you something, so that you may be glad and thoughtful at once. I will sing of those who are happy and of those who suffer. I will sing of good and of evil that remains hidden round about you. The little singing bird flies far around, to the poor fisherman, to the peasant's roof, to every one who dwells far away from you and from your Court. I love your heart more than your crown, and yet the crown has an air of sanctity

about it. I will come and sing to you—but one thing you must promise me.”

“Everything!” said the Emperor; and he stood there in his imperial robes, which he had put on himself, and pressed the sword which was heavy with gold to his heart.

“One thing I beg of you: tell no one that you have a little bird who tells you everything. Then it will go all the better.”

And the Nightingale flew away.

The servants came in to look to their dead Emperor, and—yes, there he stood, and the Emperor said, “Good morning!”

THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL

IT was terribly cold; it snowed and was already almost dark, and evening came on, the last evening of the year. In the cold and gloom a poor little girl, bare-headed and barefoot, was walking through the streets. When she left her own house she certainly had had slippers on; but of what use were they? They were very big slippers, and her mother had used them till then, so big were they. The little maid lost them as she slipped across the road, where two carriages were rattling by terribly fast. One slipper was not to be found again, and a boy had seized the other, and run away with it. He thought he could use it very well as a cradle, some day when he had children of his own. So now the little girl went with her little naked feet, which were quite red and blue with the cold. In an old apron she carried a number of matches, and a bundle of them in her hand. No one had bought anything of her all day, and no one had given her a farthing.

Shivering with cold and hunger she crept along, a picture of misery, poor little girl! The snowflakes covered her long fair hair, which fell in pretty curls over her neck; but she did not think of that now. In all the windows lights were shining, and there was a glorious smell of roast goose, for it was New Year's Eve. Yes, she thought of that!

In a corner formed by two houses, one of which projected beyond the other, she sat down, cowering.

She had drawn up her little feet, but she was still colder, and she did not dare to go home, for she had sold no matches, and did not bring a farthing of money. From her father she would certainly receive a beating, and besides, it was cold at home, for they had nothing over them but a roof through which the wind whistled, though the largest rents had been stopped with straw and rags.

Her little hands were almost benumbed with the cold. Ah! a match might do her good, if she could only draw one from the bundle, and rub it against the wall, and warm her hands at it. She drew one out. R-r-atch! how it sputtered and burned! It was a warm, bright flame, like a little candle, when she held her hands over it; it was a wonderful little light! It really seemed to the little girl as if she sat before a great polished stove, with bright brass feet and a brass cover. How the fire burned! how comfortable it was! but the little flame went out, the stove vanished, and she had only the remains of the burned match in her hand.

A second was rubbed against the wall. It burned up, and when the light fell upon the wall it became transparent like a thin veil, and she could see through it into the room. On the table a snow-white cloth was spread; upon it stood a shining dinner service; the roast goose smoked gloriously, stuffed with apples and dried plums. And what was still more splendid to behold, the goose hopped down from the dish, and waddled along the floor, with a knife and fork in its breast, to the little girl. Then the match went out, and only the thick, damp, cold wall was before her. She lighted another match. Then she was sitting under a beautiful Christmas tree; it was greater and more ornamental than the

one she had seen through the glass door at the rich merchant's. Thousands of candles burned upon the green branches, and coloured pictures like those in the print shops looked down upon them. The little girl stretched forth her hand toward them; then the match went out. The Christmas lights mounted higher. She saw them now as stars in the sky: one of them fell down, forming a long line of fire.

"Now some one is dying," thought the little girl, for her old grandmother, the only person who had loved her, and who was now dead, had told her that when a star fell down a soul mounted up to God.

She rubbed another match against the wall; it became bright again, and in the brightness the old grandmother stood clear and shining, mild and lovely.

"Grandmother!" cried the child. "Oh! take me with you! I know you will go when the match is burned out. You will vanish like the warm fire, the warm food, and the great glorious Christmas tree!"

And she hastily rubbed the whole bundle of matches, for she wished to hold her grandmother fast. And the matches burned with such a glow that it became brighter than in the middle of the day; grandmother had never been so large or so beautiful. She took the little girl in her arms, and both flew in brightness and joy above the earth, very, very high, and up there was neither cold, nor hunger, nor care—they were with God!

But in the corner, leaning against the wall, sat the poor girl with red cheeks and smiling mouth, frozen to death on the last evening of the Old Year. The New Year's sun rose upon a little corpse! The child sat there, stiff and cold, with the matches of which one

bundle was burned. "She wanted to warm herself," the people said. No one imagined what a beautiful thing she had seen, and in what glory she had gone in with her grandmother to the New Year's Day.

THE ELF-HILL

A FEW great Lizards raced nimbly about in the clefts of an old tree; they could understand each other very well, for they spoke the lizard's language.

"How it grumbles and growls in the old elf-hill!" said one Lizard. "I've not been able to close my eyes for two nights, because of the noise; I might just as well lie and have the toothache, for then I can't sleep either."

"There's something wrong in there," said the other Lizard. "They let the hill stand on four red posts till the cock crows at morn. It is regularly aired, and the elf girls have learned new dances. There's something going on."

"Yes, I have spoken with an earthworm of my acquaintance," said the third Lizard. "The earthworm came straight out of the hill, where he had been grubbing in the ground night and day: he had heard much. He can't see, the miserable creature, but he understands how to toss about and listen. They expect some friends in the elf-hill—grand strangers; but who they are the earthworm could not tell, and perhaps, indeed, he did not know. All the Will-o'-the-wisps are ordered to hold a torch dance, as it is called; and silver and gold, of which there is enough in the elf-hill, is being polished and put out in the moonshine."

"Who may these strangers be?" asked all the Lizards. "What can be going on there? Hark, how it hums! Hark, how it murmurs!"

At the same moment the elf-hill opened, and an old elf maid,¹ hollow behind, came tripping out. She was the old Elf King's housekeeper. She was a distant relative of the royal family, and wore an amber heart on her forehead. Her legs moved so rapidly—trip, trip! Gracious! how she could trip! straight down to the sea, to the night Raven.

"You are invited to the elf-hill for this evening," said she; "but will you do me a great service and undertake the invitations? You must do something, as you don't keep any house yourself. We shall have some very distinguished friends, magicians who have something to say; and so the old Elf King wants to make a display."

"Who's to be invited?" asked the night Raven.

"To the great ball the world may come, even men, if they can talk in their sleep, or do something that falls in our line. But at the first feast there's to be a strict selection; we will have only the most distinguished. I have had a dispute with the Elf King, for I declared that we could not even admit ghosts. The merman and his daughters must be invited first. They may not be very well pleased to come on the dry land, but they shall have a wet stone to sit upon, or something still better, and then I think they won't refuse for this time. All the old demons of the first class, with tails, and the wood demon and his gnomes we must have; and then I think we may not leave out the grave pig, the death horse,² and

¹ A prevailing superstition regarding the elf maid, or *elle maid*, is that she is fair to look at in front, but behind she is hollow, like a mask.

² It is a popular superstition in Denmark that under every church that is built a living horse must be buried; the ghost of this horse is the death horse, that limps every night on three legs to a house where some one is to die. Under a few churches a living pig was buried, and the ghost of this was called the grave pig.

the church twig: they certainly belong to the clergy, and are not reckoned among our people. But that's only their office: they are closely related to us, and visit us dilligently."

"Croak!" said the night Raven, and flew away to give the invitations.

The elf girls were already dancing on the elf-hill, and they danced with shawls which were woven of mist and moonshine; and that looks very pretty for those who like that sort of thing. In the midst, below the elf-hill, the great hall was splendidly decorated; the floor had been washed with moonshine, and the walls rubbed with witches' salve, so that they glowed like tulips in the light. In the kitchen, plenty of frogs were turning on the spit, snailskins with children's fingers in them, and salads of mushroom spawn, damp mouse muzzles, and hemlock; beer brewed by the marsh witch, gleaming saltpetre wine from grave cellars: everything very grand; and rusty nails and church window glass among the sweets.

The old Elf King had one of his crowns polished with powdered slate pencil; it was slate pencil from the first form, and it's very difficult for the Elf King to get first form slate pencil! In the bedroom, curtains were hung up, and fastened with snail slime. Yes, there was a grumbling and murmuring there!

"Now we must burn horsehair and pig's bristles as incense here," said the Elf King, "and then I think I shall have done my part."

"Father dear!" said the youngest of the daughters, "shall I hear now who the distinguished strangers are?"

"Well," said he, "I suppose I must tell it now. Two of my daughters must hold themselves prepared to be

married; two will certainly be married. The old gnome from Norway yonder, he who lives in the Dovre mountains, and possesses many rock castles of field stones, and a gold mine which is better than one thinks, is coming with his two sons, who want each to select a wife. The old gnome is a true old honest Norwegian veteran, merry and straightforward. I know him from old days, when we drank brotherhood with one another. He was down here to fetch his wife; now she is dead—she was a daughter of the King of the Chalk-rocks of Moen. He took his wife upon chalk, as the saying is. Oh, how I long to see the old Norwegian gnome! The lads, they say, are rather rude, forward lads; but perhaps they are belied, and they'll be right enough when they grow older. Let me see that you can teach them manners."

"And when will they come?" asked the daughters.

"That depends on wind and weather," said the Elf King. "They travel economically; they come when there's a chance by a ship. I wanted them to go across Sweden, but the old one would not incline to that wish. He does not advance with the times, and I don't like that."

Then two Will-o'-the-wisps came hopping up, one quicker than the other, and so one of them arrived first.

"They're coming! they're coming!" they cried.

"Give me my crown, and let me stand in the moon-shine," said the Elf King.

And the daughters lifted up their shawls and bowed down to the earth.

There stood the old gnome of Dovre, with the crown of hardened ice and polished fir cones; moreover, he wore a bearskin and great warm boots. His sons, on the

contrary, went bare-necked, and with trousers without braces, for they were strong men.

"Is that an acclivity?" asked the youngest of the lads; and he pointed to the elf-hill. "In Norway yonder we should call it a hole."

"Boys!" said the old man, "holes go down, mounds go up. Have you no eyes in your heads?"

The only thing they wondered at down here, they said, was that they could understand the language without difficulty.

"Don't give yourself airs," said the old man. "One would think you were home-nurtured."

And then they went into the elf-hill, where the really grand company were assembled, and that in such haste that one might almost say they had been blown together. But for each it was nicely and prettily arranged. The sea folk sat at table in great washing-tubs: they said it was just as if they were at home. All observed the ceremonies of the table except the two young Northern gnomes, and they put their legs up on the table; but they thought all that suited them well.

"Your feet off the table-cloth!" cried the old gnome.

And they obeyed, but not immediately. Their ladies they tickled with pine cones that they had brought with them, and then took off their boots for their own convenience, and gave them to the ladies to hold. But the father, the old Dovre gnome, was quite different from them: he told such fine stories of the proud Norwegian rocks, and of the waterfalls which rushed down with white foam and with a noise like thunder and the sound of organs; he told of the salmon that leaps up against the falling waters when the Reck plays upon the golden harp; he told of shining winter nights, when the



TWO WILL-O'-THE-WISPS CAME HOPPING UP

sledge bells sound, and the lads run with burning torches over the ice, which is so transparent that they see the fishes start beneath their feet. Yes! he could tell it so finely that one saw what he described: it was just as if the sawmills were going, as if the servants and maids were singing songs and dancing the kalling dance. Hurrah! all at once the old gnome gave the old elf girl a kiss: that *was* a kiss! and yet they were nothing to each other.

Now the elf maidens had to dance, nimbly, and also with stamping steps, and that suited them well; then came the artistic and solo dance. Wonderful how they could use their legs! One hardly knew where they began and where they ended, which were their arms and which their legs—they were all mingled together like wood shavings; and then they whirled round till the death horse and the grave pig turned giddy and were obliged to leave the table.

“Prur!” said the old gnome; “that’s a strange fashion of using one’s legs. But what can they do more than dance, stretch out their limbs, and make a whirlwind?”

“You shall soon know!” said the Elf King.

And then he called forward the youngest of his daughters. She was light and graceful as moonshine; she was the most delicate of all the sisters. She took a white shaving in her mouth, then she was quite gone: that was her art.

But the old gnome said he should not like his wife to possess this art, and he did not think that his boys cared for it.

The other could walk under herself, just as if she had a shadow, and the gnome people had none. The third daughter was of quite another kind; she had served in

the brewhouse of the moor witch, and knew how to stuff elder-tree knots with glow-worms.

"She will make a good housewife," said the old gnome; and then he winked a health with his eyes, for he did not want to drink too much.

Now came the fourth: she had a great harp to play upon, and when she struck the first chord all lifted up their left feet, for the gnomes are left-legged; and when she struck the second chord all were compelled to do as she wished.

"That's a dangerous woman!" said the old gnome; but both the sons went out of the hill, for they had had enough of it.

"And what can the next daughter do?" asked the old gnome.

"I have learned to love what is Norwegian," said she, "and I will never marry unless I can go to Norway."

But the youngest sister whispered to the old King, "That's only because she has heard in a Norwegian song that when the world sinks down the cliffs of Norway will remain standing like monuments, and so she wants to get up there, because she is afraid of sinking down.

"Ho! ho!" said the old gnome, "was it meant in that way? But what can the seventh and last do?"

"The sixth comes before the seventh!" said the Elf King, for he could count. But the sixth would not come out.

"I can only tell people the truth!" said she. "Nobody cares for me, and I have enough to do to sew my shroud."

Now came the seventh at last, and what could she do? Why, she could tell stories, as many as she wished.

"Here are all my fingers," said the old gnome; "tell me one for each."

And she took him by the wrist, and he laughed till it clucked within him; and when she came to the ring finger, which had a ring round its waist, just as if it knew there was to be a wedding, the old gnome said:

"Hold fast what you have: the hand is yours; I'll have you for my own wife."

And the elf girl said that the story of the ring finger and of little Peter Playman, the fifth, were still wanting.

"We'll hear those in winter," said the gnome, "and we'll hear about the pine-tree, and about the birch, and about the spirits' gifts, and about the biting frost. You shall tell your tales, for no one up there knows how to do that well; and then we'll sit in the stone chamber where the pine logs burn, and drink mead out of the horns of the old Norwegian kings—Reck has given me a couple; and when we sit there, and the Nix comes on a visit, she'll sing you all the songs of the shepherds in the mountains. That will be merry. The salmon will spring in the waterfall, and beat against the stone walls, but he shall not come in."

"Yes, it's very good living in Norway; but where are the lads?"

Yes, where were they? They were running about in the fields, and blowing out the Will-o'-the-wisps, which had come so good-naturedly for the torch dance.

"What romping about is that?" said the old gnome. "I have taken a mother for you, and now you may take one of the aunts."

But the lads said that they would rather make a

speech and drink brotherhood—they did not care to marry; and they made speeches, and drank brotherhood, and tipped up their glasses on their nails, to show they had emptied them. Afterward they took their coats off and lay down on the table to sleep, for they made no ceremony. But the old gnome danced about the room with his young bride, and he changed boots with her, for that's more fashionable than exchanging rings.

"Now the cock crows," said the old elf girl who attended to the housekeeping. "Now we must shut the shutters, so that the sun may not burn us."

And the hill shut itself up. But outside, the Lizards ran up and down in the cleft tree, and one said to the other:

"Oh, how I like that old Norwegian gnome!"

"I like the lads better," said the Earthworm. But he could not see, the miserable creature.

THE OLD HOUSE

DOWN yonder, in the street, stood an old, old house. It was almost three hundred years old, for one could read as much on the beam, on which was carved the date of its erection, surrounded by tulips and trailing hops. There one could read entire verses in the characters of olden times, and over each window a face had been carved in the beam, and these faces made all kinds of grimaces. One story projected a long way above the other, and close under the roof was a leaden gutter with a dragon's head. The rain-water was to run out of the dragon's mouth, but it ran out of the creature's body instead, for there was a hole in the pipe.

All the other houses in the street were still new and neat, with large window-panes and smooth walls. One could easily see that they would have nothing to do with the old house. They thought perhaps, "How long is that old rubbish-heap to stand there, a scandal to the whole street? The parapet stands so far forward that no one can see out of our windows what is going on in that direction. The staircase is as broad as a castle staircase, and as steep as if it led to a church tower. The iron railing looks like the gate of a family vault, and there are brass bosses upon it. It's too ridiculous!"

Just opposite stood some more new neat houses that thought exactly like the rest; but here at the window sat

a little boy, with fresh red cheeks, with clear sparkling eyes, and he was particularly fond of the old house, in sunshine as well as by moonlight. And when he looked down at the wall where the plaster had fallen off, then he could sit and fancy all kinds of pictures—how the street must have appeared in old times, with parapets, open staircases, and pointed gables; he could see soldiers with halberds, and roof-gutters running about in the form of dragons and griffins. That was just a good house to look at; and in it lived an old man who went about in leather knee-smalls, and wore a coat with great brass buttons, and a wig which one could see at once was a real wig. Every morning an old man came to him, to clean his rooms and run on his errands. With this exception the old man in the leather knee-smalls was all alone in the old house. Sometimes he came to one of the windows and looked out, and the little boy nodded to him, and the old man nodded back, and thus they became acquainted and became friends, though they had never spoken to one another; but, indeed, that was not at all necessary.

The little boy heard his parents say, "The old man opposite is very well off, but he is terribly lonely."

Next Sunday the little boy wrapped something in a piece of paper, went with it to the house door, and said to the man who ran errands for the old gentleman:

"Harkye: will you take this to the old gentleman opposite for me? I have two tin soldiers; this is one of them, and he shall have it, because I know that he is terribly lonely."

And the old attendant looked quite pleased, and nodded, and carried the Tin Soldier into the old house. Afterward he was sent over to ask if the little boy would

not like to come himself and pay a visit. His parents gave him leave; and so it was that he came to the old house.

The brass bosses on the staircase shone much more brightly than usual; one would have thought they had been polished in honour of his visit. And it was just as if the carved trumpeters—for on the doors there were carved trumpeters, standing in tulips—were blowing with all their might; their cheeks looked much rounder than before. Yes, they blew “Tan-ta-ra-ra! the little boy’s coming! tan-ta-ra-ra!” and then the door opened. The whole of the hall was hung with old portraits of knights in armour and ladies in silk gowns; and the armour rattled and the silk dresses rustled; and then came a staircase that went up a great way and down a little way, and then one came to a balcony which was certainly in a very rickety state, with long cracks and great holes; but out of all these grew grass and leaves, for the whole balcony, the courtyard, and the wall were overgrown with so much green that it looked like a garden, but it was only a balcony. Here stood old flower-pots that had faces with asses’ ears; but the flowers grew just as they chose. In one pot pinks were growing over on all sides; that is to say, the green stalks, sprout upon sprout, and they said quite plainly, “The air has caressed me and the sun has kissed me, and promised me a little flower for next Sunday, a little flower next Sunday!”

And then they came to a room where the walls were covered with pigskin, and golden flowers had been stamped on the leather.

Flowers fade fast,
But pigskin will last,

said the walls. And there stood chairs with quite high backs, with carved work and elbows on each side.

"Sit down!" said they. "Oh, how it cracks inside me! Now I shall be sure to have the gout, like the old cupboard. Gout in my back, ugh!"

And then the little boy came to the room where the old man sat.

"Thank you for the Tin Soldier, my little friend," said the old man, "and thank you for coming over to me."

"Thanks! thanks!" or "Crick! crack!" said all the furniture; there were so many pieces that they almost stood in each other's way to see the little boy.

And in the middle, on the wall, hung a picture, a beautiful lady, young and cheerful in appearance, but dressed just like people of the old times, with powder in her hair and skirts that stuck out stiffly. She said neither thanks nor crack, but looked down upon the little boy with her mild eyes; and he at once asked the old man:

"Where did you get her from?"

"From the dealer opposite," replied the old man. "Many pictures are always hanging there. No one knew them or troubled himself about them, for they are all buried. But many years ago I knew this lady, and now she's been dead and gone for half a century."

And under the picture hung, behind glass, a nosegay of withered flowers; they were certainly also half a century old—at least they looked it; and the pendulum of the great clock went to and fro, and the hands turned round, and everything in the room grew older still, but no one noticed it.

"They say at home," said the little boy, "that you are always terribly solitary."

"Oh," answered the old man, "old thoughts come, with all that they bring, to visit me; and now you are coming too, I'm very well off."

And then he took from a shelf a book with pictures: there were long processions of wonderful coaches, such as one never sees at the present day, soldiers like the knave of clubs, and citizens with waving flags. The tailors had a flag with shears on it held by two lions, and the shoemakers a flag without boots, but with an eagle that had two heads; for among the shoemakers everything must be so arranged that they can say, "There's a pair." Yes, that was a picture-book! And the old man went into the other room, to fetch preserves, and apples, and nuts. It was really glorious in that old house.

"I can't stand it," said the Tin Soldier, who stood upon the shelf. "It is terribly lonely and dull here. When a person has been accustomed to family life, one cannot get accustomed to their existence here. I cannot stand it! The day is long enough, but the evening is longer still! Here it is not at all like your house opposite, where your father and mother were always conversing cheerfully together, and you and all the other dear children made a famous noise. How solitary it is here at the old man's! Do you think he gets any kisses? Do you think he gets friendly looks, or a Christmas tree? He'll get nothing but a grave! I cannot stand it!"

"You must not look at it from the sorrowful side," said the little boy. "To me all appears remarkably

pretty, and all the old thoughts, with all they bring with them, come to visit here."

"Yes, but I don't see them, and don't know them," objected the Tin Soldier. "I can't bear it!"

"You must bear it," said the little boy.

And the old man came with the pleasantest face and with the best of preserved fruits and apples and nuts; and then the little boy thought no more of the Tin Soldier. Happy and delighted, the youngster went home; and days went by, weeks went by, and there was much nodding from the boy's home across to the old house and back; and then the little boy went over there again.

And the carved trumpeters blew, "Tan-ta-ra-ra! tan-ta-ra-ra! there's the little boy, tan-ta-ra-ra!" and the swords and armour on the old pictures rattled, and the silken dresses rustled, and the leather told tales, and the old chairs had the gout in their backs. Ugh! it was just like the first time, for over there one day or one hour was just like another.

"I can't stand it!" said the Tin Soldier. "I've wept tears of tin. It's too dreamy here. I had rather go to war and lose my arms and legs; at any rate, that's a change. I cannot stand it! Now I know what it means to have a visit from one's old thoughts and all they bring with them. I've had visits from my own, and you may believe me, that's no pleasure in the long run. I was very nearly jumping down from the shelf. I could see you all in the house opposite as plainly as if you had been here. It was Sunday morning, and you children were all standing round the table singing the psalm you sing every morning. You were standing reverently with folded hands, and your father and

mother were just as piously disposed; then the door opened, and your little sister Maria, who is not two years old yet, and who always dances when she hears music or song, of whatever description they may be, was brought in. She was not to do it, but she immediately began to dance, though she could not get into right time, for the song was too slow, so she first stood on one leg and bent her head quite over in front, but it was not long enough. You all stood very quietly, though that was rather difficult; but I laughed inwardly, and so I fell down from the table and got a bruise which I have still; for it was not right of one to laugh. But all this, and all the rest that I have experienced, now passes by inward vision, and those must be the old thoughts with everything they bring with them. Tell me, do you still sing on Sundays? Tell me something about little Maria. And how is my comrade and brother tin soldier? Yes, he must be very happy. I can't stand it!"

"You have been given away," said the little boy. "You must stay where you are. Don't you see that?"

And the old man came with a box in which many things were to be seen: little rouge-pots and scent-boxes; and old cards, so large and so richly gilt as one never sees them in these days; and many little boxes were opened, likewise the piano; and in this were painted landscapes, inside the lid. But the piano was quite hoarse when the old man played upon it; and then he nodded to the picture that he had bought at the dealer's, and the old man's eyes shone quite brightly.

"I'll go to the war! I'll go to the war!" cried the Tin Soldier, as loud as he could; and he threw himself down on the floor.

Where had he gone? The old man searched, the little boy searched, but he was gone, and could not be found.

"I shall find him," said the old man.

But he never found him: the flooring was so open and full of holes that the Tin Soldier had fallen through a crack, and there he lay as in an open grave.

And the day passed away, and the little boy went home; and the weeks passed by, and many weeks passed by. The windows were quite frozen up, and the little boy had to sit and breathe upon the panes, to make a peephole to look at the old house; and snow had blown among all the carving and the inscriptions; and covered the whole staircase, as if no one were in the house at all. And, indeed, there *was* no one in the house, for the old man had died!

In the evening a carriage stopped at the door, and in that he was laid, in his coffin; he was to rest in a family vault in the country. So he was carried away; but no one followed him on his last journey, for all his friends were dead. And the little boy kissed his hand after the coffin as it rolled away.

A few days later, and there was an auction in the old house; and the little boy saw from his window how the old knights and ladies, the flower-pots with the long ears, the chairs and the cupboards were carried away. One was taken here, another there: *her* portrait, that had been bought by the dealer, went back into his shop, and there it was hung, for no one cared for the old picture.

In the spring the house itself was pulled down, for the people said it was old rubbish. One could look from the street straight into the room with the leather

wall-covering, which was taken down, ragged and torn; and the green of the balcony hung straggling over the beams, that threatened to fall in altogether. And now a clearance was made.

"That does good!" said a neighbour.

And a capital house was built, with large windows and smooth white walls; but in front of the place where the old house had really stood, a little garden was planted, and by the neighbour's wall tall vine shoots clambered up. In front of the garden was placed a great iron railing with an iron door; and it had a stately look. The people stopped in front, and looked through. And the sparrows sat down in dozens upon the vine branches, and chattered all at once as loud as they could; but not about the old house, for they could not remember that, for many years had gone by—so many that the little boy had grown to be a man, a thorough man, whose parents rejoiced in him. And he had just married, and was come with his wife to live in the house, in front of which was the garden; and here he stood next to her while she planted a field flower which she considered very pretty; she planted it with her little hand, pressing the earth close round it with her fingers. "Ah, what was that?" She pricked herself. Out of the soft earth something pointed was sticking up. Only think! that was the Tin Soldier, the same that had been lost up in the old man's room, and had been hidden among old wood and rubbish for a long time, and had lain in the ground many a year. And the young wife first dried the Soldier in a green leaf, and then with her fine handkerchief, that smelt so deliciously. And the Tin Soldier felt just as if he were waking from a fainting fit.

"Let me see him," said the young man. And then he smiled and shook his head. "Yes, it can scarcely be the same; but it reminds me of an affair with a Tin Soldier which I had when I was a little boy."

And then he told his wife about the old house, and the old man, and of the Tin Soldier he had sent across to the old man whom he had thought so lonely; and the tears came into the young wife's eyes for the old house and the old man.

"It is possible, after all, that it may be the same Tin Soldier," said she. "I will take care of him, and remember what you have told me; but you must show me the old man's grave."

"I don't know where that is," replied he, "and no one knows it. All his friends were dead; none tended his grave, and I was but a little boy."

"Ah, how terribly lonely he must have been!" said she.

"Yes, horribly lonely," said the Tin Soldier; "but it is glorious not to be forgotten."

"Glorious!" repeated a voice close to them.

But nobody except the Tin Soldier perceived that it came from a rag of the pig's-leather hangings, which was now devoid of all gilding. It looked like wet earth, but yet it had an opinion, which it expressed thus:

Gilding fades fast,
Pigskin will last!

But the Tin Soldier did not believe that.

THE BUTTERFLY

THE Butterfly wished for a bride; and, as may well be imagined, he wanted to select a very pretty one from among the flowers; therefore he threw a critical glance at all the flower-beds, and found that every flower sat quietly and demurely on her stalk, just as a maiden ought to sit before she is engaged; but there were a great many of them, and the choice threatened to become wearisome. The Butterfly did not care to take much trouble, and consequently he flew off on a visit to the daisies. The French call this floweret "Marguerite," and they know that Marguerite can prophesy, when lovers pluck off its leaves, and ask of every leaf they pluck some question concerning their lovers. "Heartily? Painfully? Loves me much? A little? Not at all?" and so on. Every one asks in his own language. The Butterfly came to Marguerite, too, to inquire; but he did not pluck off her leaves: he kissed each of them, for he considered that most is to be done with kindness.

"Darling Marguerite daisy!" he said to her, "you are the wisest woman among the flowers. Pray, pray tell me, shall I get this one or that? Which will be my bride? When I know that, I will directly fly to her and propose for her."

But Marguerite did not answer him. She was angry that he had called her a "woman," when she was yet a girl; and there is a great difference. He asked for the

second and for the third time, and when she remained dumb, and answered him not a word, he would wait no longer, but flew away to begin his wooing at once.

It was in the beginning of spring; the crocus and the snowdrop were blooming around.

"They are very pretty," thought the Butterfly. "Charming little lasses, but a little too much of the schoolgirl about them." Like all young lads, he looked out for the elder girls.

Then he flew off to the anemones. These were a little too bitter for his taste; the violet somewhat too sentimental; the lime blossoms were too small, and, moreover, they had too many relations; the apple blossoms—they looked like roses, but they bloomed to-day, to fall off to-morrow, to fall beneath the first wind that blew; and he thought that a marriage with them would last too short a time. The Pease Blossom pleased him best of all: she was white and red, and graceful and delicate, and belonged to the domestic maidens who look well, and at the same time are useful in the kitchen. He was just about to make his offer, when close by the maiden he saw a pod at whose end hung a withered flower.

"Who is that?" he asked.

"That is my sister," replied the Pease Blossom.

"Oh, indeed; and you will get to look like her!" he said. And away he flew, for he felt quite shocked.

The honeysuckle hung forth blooming from the hedge, but there was a number of girls like that, with long faces and sallow complexions. No, he did not like her.

But which one did he like?

The spring went by, and the summer drew toward its close; it was autumn, but he was still undecided.

And now the flowers appeared in their most gorgeous robes, but in vain—they had lost the fresh fragrant air of youth. But the heart demands fragrance, even when it is no longer young, and there is very little of that to be found among the dahlias and dry chrysanthemums, therefore the Butterfly turned to the Mint on the ground.

You see, this plant has no blossom; but indeed it is blossom all over, full of fragrance from head to foot, with flower scent in every leaf.

“I shall take her,” said the Butterfly.

And he made an offer for her.

But the Mint stood silent and stiff, listening to him. At last she said:

“Friendship, if you please, but nothing more. I am old, and you are old, but we may very well live for one another; but as to marrying—no—don’t let us appear ridiculous at our age.”

And thus it happened that the Butterfly had no wife at all. He had been too long choosing, and that is a bad plan. So the Butterfly became what we call an old bachelor.

It was late in autumn, with rain and cloudy weather. The wind blew cold over the backs of the old willow-trees, so that they creaked again. It was no weather to be flying about in summer clothes, nor, indeed, was the Butterfly in the open air. He had got under shelter by chance, where there was fire in the stove and the heat of summer. He could live well enough, but he said:

"It's not enough merely to live. One must have freedom, sunshine, and a little flower."

And he flew against the window-frame, and was seen and admired, and then stuck upon a pin and placed in the box of curiosities; they could not do more for him.

"Now I am perched on a stalk, like the flowers," said the Butterfly. "It certainly is not very pleasant. It must be something like being married, for one is stuck fast."

And he consoled himself in some measure with the thought.

"That's very poor comfort," said the potted Plants in the room.

"But," thought the Butterfly, "one cannot well trust these potted Plants. They've had too much to do with mankind."

THE LITTLE SEA MAID

FAR out in the sea the water is as blue as the petals of the most beautiful cornflower, and as clear as the purest glass. But it is very deep, deeper than any cable will sound; many steeples must be placed one above the other to reach from the ground to the surface of the water. And down there live the sea people.

Now, you must not believe there is nothing down there but the naked sand; no—the strangest plants and flowers grow there, so pliable in their stalks and leaves that at the least motion of the water they move just as if they had life. All fishes, great and small, glide among the twigs, just as here the birds do in the trees. In the ‘deepest spot of all lies the Sea King’s castle: the walls are of coral and the tall Gothic windows of the clearest amber; shells form the roof, and they open and shut according as the water flows. It looks lovely, for in each shell lie gleaming pearls, a single one of which would have great value in a Queen’s diadem.

The Sea King below there had been a widower for many years, while his old mother kept house for him. She was a clever woman, but proud of her rank, so she wore twelve oysters on her tail, while the other great people were only allowed to wear six. Beyond this she was deserving of great praise, especially because she was very fond of her granddaughters, the little Sea Princesses. These were six pretty children; but the

youngest was the most beautiful of all. Her skin was as clear and as fine as a rose-leaf, her eyes were as blue as the deepest sea, but, like all the rest, she had no feet, for her body ended in a fishtail.

All day long they could play in the castle, down in the halls, where living flowers grew out of the walls. The great amber windows were opened, and then the fishes swam in to them, just as the swallows fly in to us when we open our windows; but the fishes swam straight up to the Princesses, ate out of their hands, and let themselves be stroked.

Outside the castle was a great garden with bright red and dark blue flowers; the fruit glowed like gold, and the flowers like flames of fire; and they continually kept moving their stalks and leaves. The earth itself was the finest sand, but blue as the flame of brimstone. A peculiar blue radiance lay upon everything down there: one would have thought oneself high in the air, with the canopy of heaven above and around, rather than at the bottom of the deep sea. During a calm the sun could be seen; it appeared like a purple flower, from which all light streamed out.

Each of the little Princesses had her own little place in the garden, where she might dig and plant at her good pleasure. One gave her flower-bed the form of a whale; another thought it better to make hers like a little sea woman; but the youngest made hers quite round, like the sun, and had flowers which gleamed red as the sun itself. She was a strange child, quiet and thoughtful; and when the other sisters made a display of the beautiful things they had received out of wrecked ships, she would have nothing beyond the red flowers which resembled the sun, except a pretty marble statue. This

was a figure of a charming boy, hewn out of white clear stone, which had sunk down to the bottom of the sea from a wreck. She planted a pink weeping willow beside this statue; the tree grew famously, and hung its fresh branches over the statue toward the blue sandy ground, where the shadow showed violet, and moved like the branches themselves; it seemed as if the ends of the branches and the roots were playing together and wished to kiss each other.

There was no greater pleasure for her than to hear of the world of men above them. The old grandmother had to tell all she knew of ships and towns, of men and animals. It seemed particularly beautiful to her that up on the earth the flowers shed fragrance, for they had none down at the bottom of the sea, and that the trees were green, and that the fishes which one saw down there among the trees could sing so loud and clear that it was a pleasure to hear them. What the grandmother called fishes were the little birds; the Princess could not understand them in any other way, for she had never seen a bird.

"When you have reached your fifteenth year," said the grandmother, "you shall have leave to rise up out of the sea, to sit on the rocks in the moonlight, and to see the great ships sailing by. Then you will see forests and towns!"

In the next year one of the sisters was fifteen years of age, but each of the others was one year younger than the next; so that the youngest had full five years to wait before she could come up from the bottom of the sea, and find how our world looked. But one promised to tell the others what she had seen and what she had thought the most beautiful on the first day of her

visit; for their grandmother could not tell them enough—there was so much about which they wanted information.

No one was more anxious about these things than the youngest—just that one who had the longest time to wait, and who was always quiet and thoughtful. Many a night she stood by the open window, and looked up through the dark blue water at the fishes splashing with their fins and tails. Moon and stars she could see; they certainly shone quite faintly, but through the water they looked much larger than they appear in our eyes. When something like a black cloud passed among them, she knew that it was either a whale swimming over her head, or a ship with many people: they certainly did not think that a pretty little sea maid was standing down below stretching up her white hands toward the keel of their ship.

Now the eldest Princess was fifteen years old, and might mount up to the surface of the sea.

When she came back, she had a hundred things to tell—but the finest thing, she said, was to lie in the moonshine on a sandbank in the quiet sea, and to look at the neighbouring coast, with the large town, where the lights twinkled like a hundred stars, and to hear the music and the noise and clamour of carriages and men, to see the many church steeples, and to hear the sound of the bells. Just because she could not get up to these, she longed for them more than for anything.

Oh, how the youngest sister listened! and afterward when she stood at the open window and looked up through the dark blue water, she thought of the great city with all its bustle and noise; and then she thought

she could hear the church bells ringing, even down to the depth where she was.

In the following year, the second sister received permission to mount upward through the water and to swim whither she pleased. She rose up just as the sun was setting; and this spectacle, she said, was the most beautiful. The whole sky looked like gold, she said, and as to the clouds, she could not properly describe their beauty. They sailed away over her head, purple and violet-coloured, but far quicker than the clouds there flew a flight of wild swans, like a long white veil, over the water toward where the sun stood. She swam toward them; but the sun sank, and the roseate hue faded on the sea and in the clouds.

In the following year the next sister went up. She was the boldest of them all, and therefore she swam up a broad stream that poured its waters into the sea. She saw glorious green hills clothed with vines; palaces and castles shone forth from amid splendid woods; she heard how all the birds sang; and the sun shone so warm that she was often obliged to dive under the water to cool her glowing face. In a little bay she found a whole swarm of little mortals. They were quite naked, and splashed about in the water: she wanted to play with them, but they fled in affright, and a little black animal came—it was a dog, but she had never seen a dog—and it barked at her so terribly that she became frightened, and tried to gain the open sea. But she could never forget the glorious woods, the green hills, and the pretty children, who could swim in the water though they had not fishtails.

The fourth sister was not so bold: she remained out in

the midst of the wild sea, and declared that just there it was most beautiful. One could see for many miles around, and the sky above looked like a bell of glass. She had seen ships, but only in the far distance—they looked like seagulls; and the funny dolphins had thrown somersaults, and the great whales spouted out water from their nostrils, so that it looked like hundreds of fountains all around.

Now came the turn of the fifth sister. Her birthday came in the winter, and so she saw what the others had not seen the first time. The sea looked quite green, and great icebergs were floating about; each one appeared like a pearl, she said, and yet was much taller than the church steeples built by men. They showed themselves in the strangest forms, and shone like diamonds. She had seated herself upon one of the greatest of all, and let the wind play with her long hair; and all the sailing ships tacked about in a very rapid way beyond where she sat; but toward evening the sky became covered with clouds, it thundered and lightened, and the black waves lifted the great iceblocks high up, and let them glow in the red glare. On all the ships the sails were reefed, and there was fear and anguish. But she sat quietly upon her floating iceberg, and saw the forked blue flashes dart into the sea.

Each of the sisters, as she came up for the first time to the surface of the water, was delighted with the new and beautiful sights she saw; but as they now had permission, as grown-up girls, to go whenever they liked, it became indifferent to them. They wished themselves back again, and after a month had elapsed they said it was best of all down below, for there one felt so comfortably at home.

Many an evening hour the five sisters took one another by the arm and rose up in a row over the water. They had splendid voices, more charming than any mortal could have; and when a storm was approaching, so that they could apprehend that ships would go down, they swam before the ships and sang lovely songs, which told how beautiful it was at the bottom of the sea, and exhorted the sailors not to be afraid to come down. But these could not understand the words, and thought it was the storm sighing; and they did not see the splendours below, for if the ships sank they were drowned, and came as corpses to the Sea King's palace.

When the sisters thus rose up, arm in arm, in the evening time, through the water, the little sister stood all alone looking after them; and felt as if she must weep; but the sea maid has no tears, and for this reason she suffers far more acutely.

"Oh, if I were only fifteen years old!" said she. "I know I shall love the world up there very much, and the people who live and dwell there."

At last she was really fifteen years old.

"Now, you see, you are grown up," said the grandmother, the old dowager. "Come, let me adorn you like your sisters."

And she put a wreath of white lilies in the little maid's hair, but each flower was half a pearl; and the old lady let eight great oysters attach themselves to the Princess's tail, in token of her high rank.

"But that hurts so!" said the little sea maid.

"Yes, pride must suffer pain," replied the old lady.

Oh, how glad she would have been to shake off all the tokens of rank and lay aside the heavy wreath! Her red flowers in the garden suited her better; but she could

not help it. "Farewell!" she said, and then she rose, light and clear as a water-bubble, up through the sea.

The sun had just set when she lifted her head above the sea, but all the clouds still shone like roses and gold, and in the pale red sky the evening stars gleamed bright and beautiful. The air was mild and fresh and the sea quite calm. There lay a great ship with three masts; one single sail only was set, for not a breeze stirred, and around in the shrouds and on the yards sat the sailors. There was music and singing, and as the evening closed in, hundreds of coloured lanterns were lighted up, and looked as if the flags of every nation were waving in the air. The little sea maid swam straight to the cabin window, and each time the sea lifted her up she could look through the panes, which were clear as crystal, and see many people standing within dressed in their best. But the handsomest of all was the young Prince with the great black eyes: he was certainly not much more than sixteen years old; it was his birthday, and that was the cause of all this feasting. The sailors were dancing upon deck; and when the young Prince came out, more than a hundred rockets rose into the air; they shone like day, so that the little sea maid was quite startled, and dived under the water; but soon she put out her head again and then it seemed just as if all the stars of heaven were falling down upon her. She had never seen such fireworks. Great suns spurted fire all around, glorious fiery fishes flew up into the blue air, and everything was mirrored in the clear blue sea. The ship itself was so brightly lit up that every separate rope could be seen, and the people therefore appeared the more plainly. Oh, how handsome the young Prince was! And he pressed the people's hands

and smiled, while the music rang out in the glorious night.

It became late; but the little sea maid could not turn her eyes from the ship and from the beautiful Prince. The coloured lanterns were extinguished, rockets ceased to fly into the air, and no more cannons were fired; but there was a murmuring and a buzzing deep down in the sea; and she sat on the water, swaying up and down, so that she could look into the cabin. But as the ship got more way, one sail after another was spread. And now the waves rose higher, great clouds came up, and in the distance there was lightning. Oh! it was going to be fearful weather, therefore the sailors furled the sails. The great ship flew in swift career over the wild sea: the waters rose up like great black mountains, which wanted to roll over the masts; but like a swan the ship dived into the valleys between these high waves, and then let itself be lifted on high again. To the little sea maid this seemed merry sport, but to the sailors it appeared very differently. The ship groaned and creaked; the thick planks were bent by the heavy blows; the sea broke into the ship; the mainmast snapped in two like a thin reed; and the ship lay over on her side, while the water rushed into the hold. Now the little sea maid saw that the people were in peril; she herself was obliged to take care to avoid the beams and fragments of the ship which were floating about on the waters. One moment it was so pitch dark that not a single object could be descried, but when it lightened it became so bright that she could distinguish every one on board. She looked particularly for the young Prince, and when the ship parted she saw him sink into the sea. Now she was very glad, for now he would

come down to her. But then she remembered that people could not live in the water, and that when he got down to her father's palace he would certainly be dead. No, he must not die: so she swam about among the beams and planks that strewed the surface, quite forgetting that one of them might have crushed her. Diving down deep under the water, she again rose high up among the waves, and in this way she at last came to the Prince, who could scarcely swim longer in that stormy sea. His arms and legs began to fail him, his beautiful eyes closed, and he would have died had the little sea maid not come. She held his head up over the water, and then allowed the waves to carry her and him whither they listed.

When the morning came the storm had passed by. Of the ship not a fragment was to be seen. The sun came up red and shining out of the water; it was as if its beams brought back the hue of life to the cheeks of the Prince, but his eyes remained closed. The sea maid kissed his high fair forehead and put back his wet hair, and he seemed to her to be like the marble statue in her little garden: she kissed him again and hoped that he might live.

Now she saw in front of her the dry land—high blue mountains, on whose summits the white snow gleamed as if swans were lying there. Down on the coast were glorious green forests, and a building—she could not tell whether it was a church or a convent—stood there. In its garden grew orange and citron trees, and high palms waved in front of the gate. The sea formed a little bay there; it was quite calm, but very deep. Straight toward the rock where the fine white sand had

been cast up, she swam with the handsome Prince, and laid him upon the sand, taking especial care that his head was raised in the warm sunshine.

Now all the bells rang in the great white building, and many young girls came walking through the garden. Then the little sea maid swam farther out between some high stones that stood up out of the water, laid some sea foam upon her hair and neck, so that no one could see her little countenance, and then she watched to see who would come to the poor Prince.

In a short time a young girl went that way. She seemed to be much startled, but only for a moment; then she brought more people, and the sea maid perceived that the Prince came back to life and that he smiled at all around him. But he did not cast a smile at her: he did not know that she had saved him. And she felt very sorrowful; and when he was led away into the great building, she dived mournfully under the water and returned to her father's palace.

She had always been gentle and melancholy, but now she became much more so. Her sisters asked her what she had seen the first time she rose up to the surface, but she would tell them nothing.

Many an evening and many a morning she went up to the place where she had left the Prince. She saw how the fruits of the garden grew ripe and were gathered; she saw how the snow melted on the high mountain; but she did not see the Prince, and so she always returned home more sorrowful still. Then her only comfort was to sit in her little garden, and to wind her arm around the beautiful marble statue that resembled the Prince; but she did not tend her flowers;

they grew as if in a wilderness over the paths, and trailed their long leaves and stalks up into the branches of trees, so that it became quite dark there.

At last she could endure it no longer, and told all to one of her sisters, and then the others heard of it too; but nobody knew of it beyond these and a few other sea maids, who told the secret to their intimate friends. One of these knew who the Prince was; she too had seen the festival on board the ship; and she announced whence he came and where his kingdom lay.

"Come, little sister!" said the other Princesses; and linking their arms together, they rose up in a long row out of the sea, at the place where they knew the Prince's palace lay.

This palace was built of a kind of bright yellow stone, with great marble staircases, one of which led directly down into the sea. Over the roof rose splendid gilt cupolas, and between the pillars which surrounded the whole dwelling stood marble statues which looked as if they were alive. Through the clear glass in the high windows one looked into the glorious halls, where costly silk hangings and tapestries were hung up, and all the walls were decked with splendid pictures, so that it was a perfect delight to see them. In the midst of the greatest of these walls a great fountain plashed; its jets shot high up toward the glass dome in the ceiling, through which the sun shone down upon the water and upon the lovely plants growing in the great basin.

Now she knew where he lived, and many an evening and many a night she spent there on the water. She swam far closer to the land than any of the others would have dared to venture; indeed, she went quite up the

narrow channel under the splendid marble balcony, which threw a broad shadow upon the water. Here she sat and watched the young Prince, who thought himself quite alone in the bright moonlight.

Many an evening she saw him sailing, amid the sounds of music, in his costly boat with the waving flags; she peeped up through the green reeds, and when the wind caught her silver-white veil, and any one saw it, he thought it was a white swan spreading out its wings.

Many a night when the fishermen were on the sea with their torches, she heard much good told of the young Prince; and she rejoiced that she had saved his life when he was driven about, half dead, on the wild billows: she thought how quietly his head had reclined on her bosom, and how heartily she had kissed him; but he knew nothing of it, and could not even dream of her.

More and more she began to love mankind, and more and more she wished to be able to wander about among those whose world seemed far larger than her own. For they could fly over the sea in ships, and mount up the high hills far above the clouds, and the lands they possessed stretched out in woods and fields farther than her eyes could reach. There was much she wished to know, but her sisters could not answer all her questions; therefore she applied to the old grandmother; and the old lady knew the upper world, which she rightly called "the countries above the sea," very well.

"If people are not drowned," asked the little sea maid, "can they live forever? Do they not die as we die down here in the sea?"

"Yes," replied the old lady. "They too must die, and their life is even shorter than ours. We can live

to be three hundred years old, but when we cease to exist here, we are turned into foam on the surface of the water, and have not even a grave down here among those we love. We have not an immortal soul; we never receive another life; we are like the green seaweed, which when once cut through can never bloom again. Men, on the contrary, have a soul which lives for ever, which lives on after the body has become dust; it mounts up through the clear air, up to all the shining stars! As we rise up out of the waters and behold all the lands of the earth, so they rise up to unknown, glorious places which we never see."

"Why did we not receive an immortal soul?" asked the little sea maid sorrowfully. "I would gladly give all the hundreds of years I have to live to be a human being only for one day, and to have a hope of partaking the heavenly kingdom."

"You must not think of that," replied the old lady. "We feel ourselves far more happy and far better than mankind yonder."

"Then I am to die and be cast as foam upon the sea, not hearing the music of the waves, nor seeing the pretty flowers and the red sun? Can I not do anything to win an immortal soul?"

"No!" answered the grandmother. "Only if a man were to love you so that you should be more to him than father or mother; if he should cling to you with his every thought and with all his love, and let the priest lay his right hand in yours with a promise of faithfulness here and in all eternity, then his soul would be imparted to your body, and you would receive a share of the happiness of mankind. He would give a soul to you and yet retain his own. But that can never come

to pass. What is considered beautiful here in the sea—the fishtail—they would consider ugly on the earth: they don't understand it; there one must have two clumsy supports which they call legs, to be beautiful.”

Then the little sea maid sighed, and looked mournfully upon her fishtail.

“Let us be glad!” said the old lady. “Let us dance and leap in the three hundred years we have to live. That is certainly long enough; after that we can rest ourselves all the better. This evening we shall have a court ball.”

It was a splendid sight, such as is never seen on earth. The walls and the ceiling of the great dancing-saloon were of thick but transparent glass. Several hundreds of huge shells, pink and grass-green, stood on each side in rows, filled with a blue fire which lit up the whole hall and shone through the walls, so that the sea without was quite lit up; one could see all the innumerable fishes, great and small, swimming toward the glass walls; of some the scales gleamed with purple, while in others they shone like silver and gold. Through the midst of the hall flowed a broad stream, and on this the sea men and sea women danced to their own charming songs. Such beautiful voices the people of the earth have not. The little sea maid sang the most sweetly of all, and the whole Court applauded with hands and tails, and for a moment she felt gay in her heart, for she knew she had the loveliest voice of all in the sea or on the earth. But soon she thought again of the world above her; she could not forget the charming Prince, or her sorrow at not having an immortal soul like his. Therefore she crept out of her father's palace, and while everything within was joy and gladness, she sat

melancholy in her little garden. Then she heard the bugle horn sounding through the waters, and thought, "Now he is certainly sailing above, he on whom my wishes hang, and in whose hand I should like to lay my life's happiness. I will dare everything to win him and an immortal soul. While my sisters dance yonder in my father's palace, I will go to the sea witch of whom I have always been so much afraid: perhaps she can counsel and help me."

Now the little sea maid went out of her garden to the foaming whirlpools behind which the sorceress dwelt. She had never travelled that way before. No flowers grew there, no sea grass; only the naked grey sand stretched out toward the whirlpools, where the water rushed round like roaring millwheels and tore down everything it seized into the deep. Through the midst of these rushing whirlpools she was obliged to pass to get into the domain of the witch; and for a long way there was no other road except one which led over warm gushing mud: this the witch called her turf-moor. Behind it lay her house in the midst of a singular forest, in which all the trees and bushes were polypes—half animals, half plants. They looked like hundred-headed snakes growing up out of the earth. All the branches were long slimy arms, with fingers like supple worms, and they moved limb by limb from the root to the farthest point; all that they could seize on in the water they held fast and did not let it go. The little sea maid stopped in front of them quite frightened; her heart beat with fear, and she was nearly turning back; but then she thought of the Prince and the human soul, and her courage came back again. She bound her long flying hair closely around her head, so that the polypes

might not seize it. She put her hands together on her breast, and then shot forward as a fish shoots through the water, among the ugly polypes, which stretched out their supple arms and fingers after her. She saw that each of them held something it had seized with hundreds of little arms, like strong iron bands. People who had perished at sea and had sunk down deep, looked forth as white skeletons from among the polypes' arms; ships' oars and chests they also held fast, and skeletons of land animals, and a little sea woman whom they had caught and strangled; and this seemed the most terrible of all to our little Princess.

Now she came to a great marshy place in the wood, where fat water-snakes rolled about, showing their ugly cream-coloured bodies. In the midst of this marsh was a house built of white bones of shipwrecked men; there sat the sea witch feeding a toad out of her mouth, just as a person might feed a little canary-bird with sugar. She called the ugly fat water-snakes her little chickens, and allowed them to crawl upward and all about her.

"I know what you want," said the sea witch. "It is stupid of you, but you shall have your way, for it will bring you to grief, my pretty Princess. You want to get rid of your fishtail, and have two supports instead of it, like those the people of the earth walk with, so that the young Prince may fall in love with you, and you may get an immortal soul." And with this the witch laughed loudly and disagreeably, so that the toad and the water-snakes tumbled down to the ground, where they crawled about. "You come just in time," said the witch: "after to-morrow at sunrise I could not help you until another year had gone by. I will prepare

a draught for you, with which you must swim to land to-morrow before the sun rises, and seat yourself there and drink it; then your tail will shrivel up and become what the people of the earth call legs, but it will hurt you—it will seem as if you were cut with a sharp sword. All who see you will declare you to be the prettiest human being they ever beheld. You will keep your graceful walk; no dancer will be able to move so lightly as you; but every step you take will be as if you trod upon sharp knives, and as if your blood must flow. If you will bear all this, I can help you.”

“Yes,” said the little sea maid, with a trembling voice; and she thought of the Prince and the immortal soul.

“But, remember,” said the witch, “when you have once received a human form, you can never be a sea maid again; you can never return through the water to your sisters or to your father’s palace; and if you do not win the Prince’s love, so that he forgets father and mother for your sake, is attached to you heart and soul, and tells the priest to join your hands, you will not receive an immortal soul. On the first morning after he has married another your heart will break and you will become foam on the water.”

“I will do it,” said the little sea maid; but she became as pale as death.

“But you must pay me, too,” said the witch; “and it is not a trifle that I ask. You have the finest voice of all here at the bottom of the water; with that you think to enchant him; but this voice you must give to me. The best thing you possess I will have for my costly draught! I must give you my own blood in it, so that the draught may be sharp as a two-edged sword.”



"YOU COME JUST IN TIME," SAID THE WITCH

"But if you take away my voice," said the little sea maid, "what will remain to me?"

"Your beautiful form," replied the witch, "your graceful walk, and your speaking eyes: with those you can take captive a human heart. Well, have you lost your courage? Put out your little tongue, and then I will cut it off for my payment, and then you shall have the strong draught."

"It shall be so," said the little sea maid.

And the witch put on her pot to brew the draught.

"Cleanliness is a good thing," said she; and she cleaned out the pot with the snakes, which she tied up in a big knot; then she scratched herself, and let her black blood drop into it. The steam rose up in the strangest forms, enough to frighten the beholder. Every moment the witch threw something else into the pot; and when it boiled thoroughly, there was a sound like the weeping of a crocodile. At last the draught was ready. It looked like the purest water.

"There you have it," said the witch.

And she cut off the little sea maid's tongue, so that now the Princess was dumb, and could neither sing nor speak.

She could see her father's palace. The torches were extinguished in the great hall, and they were certainly sleeping within, but she did not dare to go to them now that she was dumb and was about to quit them for ever. She felt as if her heart would burst with sorrow. She crept into the garden, took a flower from each bed of her sisters, blew a thousand kisses toward the palace, and rose up through the dark blue sea.

The sun had not yet risen when she beheld the Prince's castle and mounted the splendid marble stair-

case. The moon shone beautifully clear. The little sea maid drank the burning, sharp draught, and it seemed as if a two-edged sword went through her delicate body. She fell down in a swoon, and lay as if she were dead. When the sun shone out over the sea she awoke, and felt a sharp pain; but just before her stood the handsome young Prince. He fixed his coal-black eyes upon her, so that she cast down her own, and then she perceived that her fishtail was gone, and that she had the prettiest pair of white feet a little girl could have. But she had no clothes, so she shrouded herself in her long hair. The Prince asked how she came there; and she looked at him mildly, but very mournfully, with her dark blue eyes, for she could not speak. Then he took her by the hand, and led her into the castle. Each step she took was, as the witch had told her, as if she had been treading on pointed needles and knives, but she bore it gladly. At the Prince's right hand she moved on, light as a soap-bubble, and he, like all the rest, was astonished at her graceful swaying movements.

She now received splendid clothes of silk and muslin. In the castle she was the most beautiful creature to be seen; but she was dumb, and could neither sing nor speak. Lovely slaves, dressed in silk and gold, stepped forward, and sang before the Prince and his royal parents; one sang more charmingly than all the rest, and the Prince smiled at her and clapped his hands. Then the little sea maid became sad; she knew that she herself had sung far more sweetly, and thought: "Oh! he should only know that I have given away my voice for ever to be with him."

Now the slaves danced pretty waving dances to the

loveliest music; then the little sea maid lifted her beautiful white arms, stood on the tips of her toes, and glided dancing over the floor as no one had yet danced. At each movement her beauty became more apparent, and her eyes spoke more directly to the heart than the songs of the slaves.

All were delighted, and especially the Prince, who called her his little foundling; and she danced again and again, although every time she touched the earth it seemed as if she were treading upon sharp knives. The Prince said that she should always remain with him, and she received permission to sleep on a velvet cushion before his door.

He had a page's dress made for her, that she might accompany him on horseback. They rode through the blooming woods, where the green boughs swept their shoulders and the little birds sang in the fresh leaves. She climbed with the Prince up the high mountains, and although her delicate feet bled so that even the others could see it, she laughed at it herself, and followed him until they saw the clouds sailing beneath them like a flock of birds travelling to distant lands.

At home in the Prince's castle, when the others slept at night, she went out on to the broad marble steps. It cooled her burning feet to stand in the cold sea water, and then she thought of the dear ones in the deep.

Once, in the night-time, her sisters came arm in arm. Sadly they sang as they floated above the water; and she beckoned to them, and they recognized her, and told her how she had grieved them all. Then she visited them every night; and once she saw in the distance her old grandmother, who had not been above the surface for many years, and the Sea King with his crown upon

his head. They stretched out their hands toward her, but did not venture so near the land as her sisters.

Day by day the Prince grew more fond of her. He loved her as one loves a dear good child, but it never came into his head to make her his wife; and yet she must become his wife, or she would not receive an immortal soul, and would have to become foam on the sea on his marriage morning.

"Do you not love me best of them all?" the eyes of the little sea maid seemed to say, when he took her in his arms and kissed her fair forehead.

"Yes, you are the dearest to me!" said the Prince, "for you have the best heart of them all. You are the most devoted to me, and are like a young girl whom I once saw, but whom I certainly shall not find again. I was on board a ship which was wrecked. The waves threw me ashore near a holy temple, where several young girls performed the service. The youngest of them found me by the shore and saved my life. I only saw her twice: she was the only one in the world I could love; but you chase her picture out of my mind, you are so like her. She belongs to the holy temple, and therefore my good fortune has sent you to me. We will never part!"

"Ah! he does not know that I saved his life," thought the little sea maid. "I carried him over the sea to the wood where the temple stands. I sat here under the foam and looked to see if any one would come. I saw the beautiful girl whom he loves better than me." And the sea maid sighed deeply—she could not weep. "The maiden belongs to the holy temple," she said, "and will never come out into the world—they will meet no more.

I am with him and see him every day; I will cherish him, love him, give up my life for him."

But now they said that the Prince was to marry, and that the beautiful daughter of a neighbouring King was to be his wife, and that was why such a beautiful ship was being prepared. The story was, that the Prince travelled to visit the land of the neighbouring King, but it was done that he might see the King's daughter. A great company was to go with him. The little sea maid shook her head and smiled; she knew the Prince's thoughts far better than any of the others.

"I must travel," he had said to her; "I must see the beautiful Princess: my parents desire it, but they do not wish to compel me to bring her home as my bride. I cannot love her. She is not like the beautiful maiden in the temple, whom you resemble. If I were to choose a bride, I would rather choose you, my dear dumb foundling with the speaking eyes."

And he kissed her red lips and played with her long hair, so that she dreamed of happiness and of an immortal soul.

"You are not afraid of the sea, my dumb child?" said he, when they stood on the superb ship which was to carry him to the country of the neighbouring King; and he told her of storm and calm, of strange fishes in the deep, and of what the divers had seen there. And she smiled at his tales, for she knew better than any one what happened at the bottom of the sea.

In the moonlight night, when all were asleep, except the steersman who stood by the helm, she sat on the side of the ship gazing down through the clear water. She fancied she saw her father's palace. High on the

battlements stood her old grandmother, with the silver crown on her head, and looking through the rushing tide up to the vessel's keel. Then her sisters came forth over the water, and looked mournfully at her and wrung their white hands. She beckoned to them, smiled, and wished to tell them that she was well and happy; but the cabin-boy approached her, and her sisters dived down, so that he thought the white objects he had seen were foam on the surface of the water.

The next morning the ship sailed into the harbour of the neighbouring King's splendid city. All the church bells sounded, and from the high towers the trumpets were blown, while the soldiers stood there with flying colours and flashing bayonets. Each day brought some festivity with it; balls and entertainments followed one another; but the Princess was not yet there. People said she was being educated in a holy temple far away, where she was learning every royal virtue. At last she arrived.

The little sea maid was anxious to see the beauty of the Princess, and was obliged to acknowledge it. A more lovely apparition she had never beheld. The Princess's skin was pure and clear, and behind the long dark eyelashes there smiled a pair of faithful dark blue eyes.

"You are the lady who saved me when I lay like a corpse upon the shore!" said the Prince; and he folded his blushing bride to his heart. "Oh, I am too, too happy!" he cried to the little sea maid. "The best hope I could have is fulfilled. You will rejoice at my happiness, for you are the most devoted to me of them all!"

And the little sea maid kissed his hand; and it seemed already to her as if her heart was broken, for his wed-

ding morning was to bring death to her, and change her into foam on the sea.

All the church bells were ringing, and heralds rode about the streets announcing the betrothal. On every altar fragrant oil was burning in gorgeous lamps of silver. The priests swung their censers, and bride and bridegroom laid hand in hand, and received the bishop's blessing. The little sea maid was dressed in cloth of gold, and held up the bride's train; but her ears heard nothing of the festive music, her eye marked not the holy ceremony; she thought of the night of her death, and of all that she had lost in this world.

On the same evening the bride and bridegroom went on board the ship. The cannon roared, all the flags waved; in the midst of the ship a costly tent of gold and purple, with the most beautiful cushions, had been set up, and there the married pair were to sleep in the cool still night.

The sails swelled in the wind and the ship glided smoothly and lightly over the clear sea. When it grew dark, coloured lamps were lighted and the sailors danced merry dances on deck. The little sea maid thought of the first time when she had risen up out of the sea, and beheld a similar scene of splendour and joy; and she joined in the whirling dance, and flitted on as the swallow flits away when he is pursued; and all shouted and admired her, for she had danced so prettily. Her delicate feet were cut as if with knives, but she did not feel it, for her heart was wounded far more painfully. She knew this was the last evening on which she should see him for whom she had left her friends and her home, and had given up her beautiful voice, and had suffered unheard-of pains every day,

while he was utterly unconscious of all. It was the last evening she should breathe the same air with him, and behold the starry sky and the deep sea; and everlasting night without thought or dream awaited her, for she had no soul, and could win none. And everything was merriment and gladness on the ship till past midnight, and she laughed and danced with thoughts of death in her heart. The Prince kissed his beautiful bride, and she played with his raven hair, and hand in hand they went to rest in the splendid tent.

It became quiet on the ship; only the helmsman stood by the helm, and the little sea maid leaned her white arms upon the bulwark and gazed out toward the east for the morning dawn—the first ray, she knew, would kill her. Then she saw her sisters rising out of the flood; they were pale, like herself; their long beautiful hair no longer waved in the wind—it had been cut off.

“We have given it to the witch, that we might bring you help, so that you may not die to-night. She has given us a knife; here it is—look! how sharp! Before the sun rises you must thrust it into the heart of the Prince, and when the warm blood falls upon your feet they will grow together again into a fishtail, and you will become a sea maid again, and come back to us, and live your three hundred years before you become dead salt sea foam. Make haste! He or you must die before the sun rises! Our old grandmother mourns so that her white hair has fallen off, as ours did under the witch’s scissors. Kill the Prince and come back! Make haste! Do you see that red streak in the sky? In a few minutes the sun will rise, and you must die!”

And they gave a very mournful sigh, and vanished beneath the waves.

The little sea maid drew back the purple curtain from the tent, and saw the beautiful bride lying with her head on the Prince's breast; and she bent down and kissed his brow, and gazed up to the sky where the morning red was gleaming brighter and brighter; then she looked at the sharp knife, and again fixed her eyes upon the Prince, who in his sleep murmured his bride's name. She only was in his thoughts, and the knife trembled in the sea maid's hands. But then she flung it far away into the waves—they gleamed red where it fell, and it seemed as if drops of blood spurted up out of the water. Once more she looked with half-extinguished eyes upon the Prince; then she threw herself from the ship into the sea, and felt her frame dissolving into foam.

Now the sun rose up out of the sea. The rays fell mild and warm upon the cold sea foam, and the little sea maid felt nothing of death. She saw the bright sun, and over her head sailed hundreds of glorious ethereal beings—she could see them through the white sails of the ship and the red clouds of the sky; their speech was melody, but of such a spiritual kind that no human ear could hear it, just as no human eye could see them; without wings they floated through the air. The little sea maid found that she had a frame like these, and was rising more and more out of the foam.

"Whither am I going?" she asked; and her voice sounded like that of the other beings, so spiritual, that no earthly music could be compared to it.

"To the daughters of the air!" replied the others.

"A sea maid has no immortal soul, and can never gain one, except she win the love of a mortal. Her eternal existence depends upon the power of another. The daughters of the air have likewise no immortal soul, but they can make themselves one through good deeds. We fly to the hot countries, where the close, pestilent air kills men, and there we bring coolness. We disperse the fragrance of the flowers through the air, and spread refreshment and health. After we have striven for three hundred years to accomplish all the good we can bring about, we receive an immortal soul and take part in the eternal happiness of men. You, poor little sea maid, have striven with your whole heart after the goal we pursue; you have suffered and endured; you have by good works raised yourself to the world of spirits, and can gain an immortal soul after three hundred years."

And the little sea maid lifted her glorified eyes toward God's sun, and for the first time she felt them fill with tears. On the ship there was again life and noise. She saw the Prince and his bride searching for her; then they looked mournfully at the pearly foam, as if they knew that she had thrown herself into the waves. Invisible, she kissed the forehead of the bride, fanned the Prince, and mounted with the other children of the air on the rosy cloud which floated through the ether.

"After three hundred years we shall thus float into Paradise!"

"And we may even get there sooner," whispered a daughter of the air. "Invisible we float into the houses of men where children are, and for every day on which we find a good child that brings joy to its parents and deserves their love, our time of probation is shortened.

The child does not know when we fly through the room; and when we smile with joy at the child's conduct, a year is counted off from the three hundred; but when we see a naughty or a wicked child, we shed tears of grief, and for every tear a day is added to our time of trial."

THE WILD SWANS

FAR away, where the swallows fly when our winter comes on, lived a King who had eleven sons, and one daughter named Eliza. The eleven brothers were Princes, and each went to school with a star on his breast and his sword by his side. They wrote with pencils of diamond upon slates of gold, and learned by heart just as well as they read: one could see directly that they were Princes. Their sister Eliza sat upon a little stool of plate glass, and had a picture-book which had been bought for the value of half a kingdom.

Oh, the children were particularly well off; but it was not always to remain so.

Their father, who was King of the whole country, married a bad Queen who did not love the poor children at all. On the very first day they noticed this. In the whole palace there was great feasting, and the children were playing there. Then guests came; but instead of the children receiving, as they had been accustomed to do, all the spare cake and all the roasted apples, they only had some sand given them in a teacup, and were told that they might make believe that was something good.

The next week the Queen took the little sister Eliza into the country, to a peasant and his wife; and but a short time had elapsed before she told the King so many falsehoods about the poor Princes that he did not trouble himself any more about them.

"Fly out into the world and get your own living," said the wicked Queen. "Fly like great birds without a voice."

But she could not make it so bad for them as she had intended, for they became eleven magnificent wild swans. With a strange cry they flew out of the palace windows, far over the park and into the wood.

It was yet quite early morning when they came by the place where their sister Eliza lay asleep in the peasant's room. Here they hovered over the roof, turned their long necks, and flapped their wings; but no one heard or saw it. They were obliged to fly on, high up toward the clouds, far away into the wide world; there they flew into a great dark wood, which stretched away to the seashore.

Poor little Eliza stood in the peasant's room and played with a green leaf, for she had no other playthings. And she pricked a hole in the leaf, and looked through it up at the sun, and it seemed to her that she saw her brothers' clear eyes; each time the warm sun shone upon her cheeks she thought of all the kisses they had given her.

Each day passed just like the rest. When the wind swept through the great rose hedges outside the house, it seemed to whisper to them, "What can be more beautiful than you?" But the roses shook their heads and answered, "Eliza!" And when the old woman sat in front of her door on Sunday and read in her hymn-book, the wind turned the leaves and said to the book, "Who can be more pious than you?" and the hymn-book said, "Eliza!" And what the roses and the hymn-book said was the simple truth.

When she was fifteen years old she was to go home.

And when the Queen saw how beautiful she was, she became spiteful and filled with hatred toward her. She would have been glad to change her into a wild swan, like her brothers, but she did not dare to do so at once, because the King wished to see his daughter.

Early in the morning the Queen went into the bath, which was built of white marble, and decked with soft cushions and the most splendid tapestry; and she took three toads and kissed them, and said to the first:

"Sit upon Eliza's head when she comes into the bath, that she may become as stupid as you.—Seat yourself upon her forehead," she said to the second, "that she may become as ugly as you, and her father may not know her.—Rest on her heart," she whispered to the third, "that she may receive an evil mind and suffer pain from it."

Then she put the toads into the clear water, which at once assumed a green colour; and calling Eliza, caused her to undress and step into the water. And while Eliza dived, one of the toads sat upon her hair, and the second on her forehead, and the third on her heart; but she did not seem to notice it; and as soon as she rose, three red poppies were floating on the water. If the creatures had not been poisonous, and if the witch had not kissed them, they would have been changed into red roses. But at any rate they became flowers, because they had rested on the girl's head, and forehead, and heart. She was too good and innocent for sorcery to have power over her.

When the wicked Queen saw that, she rubbed Eliza with walnut juice, so that the girl became dark brown, and smeared a hurtful ointment on her face, and let her

beautiful hair hang in confusion. It was quite impossible to recognize the pretty Eliza.

When her father saw her he was much shocked, and declared this was not his daughter. No one but the yard dog and the swallows would recognize her; but they were poor animals who had nothing to say in the matter.

Then poor Eliza wept, and thought of her eleven brothers who were all away. Sorrowfully she crept out of the castle, and walked all day over field and moor till she came into the great wood. She did not know whither she wished to go, only she felt very downcast and longed for her brothers: they had certainly been, like herself, thrust forth into the world, and she would seek for them and find them.

She had been only a short time in the wood when the night fell; she quite lost the path, therefore she lay down upon the soft moss, prayed her evening prayer, and leaned her head against the stump of a tree. Deep silence reigned around, the air was mild, and in the grass and in the moss gleamed like a green fire hundreds of glow-worms; when she lightly touched one of the twigs with her hand, the shining insects fell down upon her like shooting stars.

The whole night long she dreamed of her brothers. They were children again playing together, writing with their diamond pencils upon their golden slates, and looking at the beautiful picture-book which had cost half a kingdom. But on the slates they were not writing, as they had been accustomed to do, lines and letters, but the brave deeds they had done, and all they had seen and experienced; and in the picture-book

everything was alive—the birds sang, and the people went out of the book and spoke with Eliza and her brothers. But when the leaf was turned, they jumped back again directly, so that there should be no confusion.

When she awoke the sun was already standing high. She could certainly not see it, for the lofty trees spread their branches far and wide above her. But the rays played there above like a gauzy veil, there was a fragrance from the fresh verdure, and the birds almost perched upon her shoulders. She heard the plashing of water; it was from a number of springs all flowing into a lake which had the most delightful sandy bottom. It was surrounded by thick growing bushes, but at one part the stags had made a large opening, and here Eliza went down to the water. The lake was so clear, that if the wind had not stirred the branches and the bushes, so that they moved, one would have thought they were painted upon the depths of the lake, so clearly was every leaf mirrored, whether the sun shone upon it or whether it lay in shadow.

When Eliza saw her own face she was terrified—so brown and ugly was she; but when she wetted her little hand and rubbed her eyes and her forehead, the white skin gleamed forth again. Then she undressed and went down into the fresh water: a more beautiful King's daughter than she was could not be found in the world. And when she had dressed herself again and plaited her long hair, she went to the bubbling spring, drank out of her hollow hand, and then wandered far into the wood, not knowing whither she went. She thought of her dear brothers, and thought that Heaven would certainly not forsake her. It is God who lets the wild apples grow, to satisfy the

hungry. He showed her a wild apple-tree, with the boughs bending under the weight of the fruit. Here she took her midday meal, placing props under the boughs, and then went into the darkest part of the forest. There it was so still that she could hear her own footsteps, as well as the rustling of every dry leaf which bent under her feet. Not one bird was to be seen, not one ray of sunlight could find its way through the great dark boughs of the trees; the lofty trunks stood so close together that when she looked before her it appeared as though she were surrounded by sets of palings one behind the other. Oh, here was a solitude such as she had never before known!

The night came on quite dark. Not a single glow-worm now gleamed on the grass. Sorrowfully she lay down to sleep. Then it seemed to her as if the branches of the trees parted above her head, and mild eyes of angels looked down upon her from on high.

When the morning came, she did not know if it had really been so or if she had dreamed it.

She went a few steps forward, and then she met an old woman with berries in her basket, and the old woman gave her a few of them. Eliza asked the dame if she had not seen eleven Princes riding through the wood.

"No," replied the old woman, "but yesterday I saw eleven swans swimming in the river close by, with golden crowns on their heads."

And she led Eliza a short distance farther, to a declivity, and at the foot of the slope a little river wound its way. The trees on its margin stretched their long leafy branches across toward each other, and where their natural growth would not allow them to come

together, the roots had been torn out of the ground, and hung, intermingled with the branches, over the water.

Eliza said farewell to the old woman, and went beside the river to the place where the stream flowed out to the great open ocean.

The whole glorious sea lay before the young girl's eyes, but not one sail appeared on its surface, and not a boat was to be seen. How was she to proceed? She looked at the innumerable little pebbles on the shore; the water had worn them all round. Glass, ironstones, everything that was there had received its shape from the water, which was much softer than even her delicate hand.

"It rolls on unweariedly, and thus what is hard becomes smooth. I will be just as unwearied. Thanks for your lesson, you clear rolling waves; my heart tells me that one day you will lead me to my dear brothers."

On the foam-covered sea-grass lay eleven white swan feathers, which she collected into a bunch. Drops of water were upon them—whether they were dewdrops or tears nobody could tell. Solitary it was there on the strand, but she did not feel it, for the sea showed continual changes—more in a few hours than the lovely lakes can produce in a whole year. Then a great black cloud came. It seemed as if the sea would say, "I can look angry, too"; and then the wind blew, and the waves turned their white side outward. But when the clouds gleamed red and the winds slept, the sea looked like a rose-leaf; sometimes it became green, sometimes white. But however quietly it might rest, there was still a slight motion on the shore; the water rose gently like the breast of a sleeping child.

When the sun was just about to set, Eliza saw eleven

wild swans, with crowns on their heads, flying toward the land: they swept along one after the other, so that they looked like a long white band. Then Eliza descended the slope and hid herself behind a bush. The swans alighted near her and flapped their great white wings.

As soon as the sun had disappeared beneath the water, the swan's feathers fell off, and eleven handsome Princes, Eliza's brothers, stood there. She uttered a loud cry, for although they were greatly altered, she knew and felt that it must be they. And she sprang into their arms and called them by their names; and the Princes felt supremely happy when they saw their little sister again; and they knew her, though she was now tall and beautiful. They smiled and wept; and soon they discovered how cruel their stepmother had been to them all.

"We brothers," said the eldest, "fly about as wild swans as long as the sun is in the sky, but directly it sinks down we receive our human form again. Therefore we must always take care that we have a resting-place for our feet when the sun sets; for if at that moment we were flying up toward the clouds, we should sink down into the deep as men. We do not dwell here: there lies a land just as fair as this beyond the sea. But the way thither is long; we must cross the great sea, and on our path there is no island where we could pass the night, only a little rock stands forth in the midst of the waves; it is but just large enough that we can rest upon it close to each other. If the sea is rough, the foam spurts far over us, but we thank God for the rock. There we pass the night in our human form: but for this rock we could never visit our beloved native

land, for we require two of the longest days in the year for our journey. Only once in each year is it granted to us to visit our home. For eleven days we may stay here and fly over the great wood, from whence we can see the palace in which we were born and in which our father lives, and the high church tower, beneath whose shade our mother lies buried. Here it seems to us as though the bushes and trees were our relatives; here the wild horses career across the steppe, as we have seen them do in our childhood; here the charcoal-burner sings the old songs to which we danced as children; here is our fatherland: hither we feel ourselves drawn, and here we have found you, our dear little sister. Two days more we may stay here; then we must away across the sea to a glorious land, but which is not our native land. How can we bear you away? for we have neither ship nor boat."

"In what way can I release you?" asked the sister; and they conversed nearly the whole night, only slumbering for a few hours.

She was awakened by the rustling of the swans' wings above her head. Her brothers were again enchanted, and they flew in wide circles and at last far away; but one of them, the youngest, remained behind, and the swan laid his head in her lap, and she stroked his wings; and the whole day they remained together. Toward evening the others came back, and when the sun had gone down they stood there in their own shapes.

"To-morrow we fly far away from here, and cannot come back until a whole year has gone by. But we cannot leave you thus! Have you courage to come with us? My arm is strong enough to carry you in the

wood; and should not all our wings be strong enough to fly with you over the sea?"

"Yes, take me with you," said Eliza.

The whole night they were occupied in weaving a net of the pliable willow bark and tough reeds; and it was great and strong. On this net Eliza lay down; and when the sun rose, and her brothers were changed into wild swans, they seized the net with their beaks, and flew with their beloved sister, who was still asleep, high up toward the clouds. The sunbeams fell exactly upon her face, so one of the swans flew over her head, that his broad wings might overshadow her.

They were far away from the shore when Eliza awoke: she fancied she was still dreaming, so strange did it appear to her to be carried high through the air and over the sea. By her side lay a branch with beautiful ripe berries and a bundle of sweet-tasting roots. The youngest of the brothers had collected them and placed them there for her. She smiled at him thankfully, for she recognized him; he it was who flew over her and shaded her with his wings.

They were so high that the greatest ship they descried beneath them seemed like a white seagull lying upon the waters. A great cloud stood behind them—it was a perfect mountain; and upon it Eliza saw her own shadow and those of the eleven swans; there they flew on, gigantic in size. Here was a picture, a more splendid one than she had ever yet seen. But as the sun rose higher and the cloud was left farther behind them, the floating shadowy images vanished away.

The whole day they flew onward through the air, like a whirring arrow, but their flight was slower than it

was wont to be, for they had their sister to carry. Bad weather came on; the evening drew near; Eliza looked anxiously at the setting sun, for the lonely rock in the ocean could not be seen. It seemed to her as if the swans beat the air more strongly with their wings. Alas! she was the cause that they did not advance fast enough. When the sun went down, they must become men and fall into the sea and drown. Then she prayed a prayer from the depths of her heart; but still she could descry no rock. The dark clouds came nearer in a great black threatening body, rolling forward like a mass of lead, and the lightning burst forth, flash upon flash.

Now the sun had just touched the margin of the sea. Eliza's heart trembled. Then the swans darted downward, so swiftly that she thought they were falling, but they paused again. The sun was half hidden below the water. And now for the first time she saw the little rock beneath her, and it looked no larger than a seal might look, thrusting his head forth from the water. The sun sank very fast; at last it appeared only like a star; and then her foot touched the firm land. The sun was extinguished like the last spark in a piece of burned paper; her brothers were standing around her, arm in arm, but there was not more than just enough room for her and for them. The sea beat against the rock and went over her like small rain; the sky glowed in continual fire, and peal on peal the thunder rolled; but sister and brothers held each other by the hand and sang psalms, from which they gained comfort and courage.

In the morning twilight the air was pure and calm. As soon as the sun rose the swans flew away with Eliza

from the island. The sea still ran high, and when they soared up aloft, the white foam looked like millions of white swans swimming upon the water.

When the sun mounted higher, Eliza saw before her, half floating in the air, a mountainous country with shining masses of ice on its water, and in the midst of it rose a castle, apparently a mile long, with row above row of elegant columns, while beneath waved the palm woods and bright flowers as large as millwheels. She asked if this was the country to which they were bound, but the swans shook their heads, for what she beheld was the gorgeous, ever-changing palace of Fata Morgana, and into this they might bring no human being. As Eliza gazed at it, mountains, woods, and castle fell down, and twenty proud churches, all nearly alike, with high towers and pointed windows, stood before them. She fancied she heard the organs sounding, but it was the sea she heard. When she was quite near the churches they changed to a fleet sailing beneath her, but when she looked down it was only a sea mist gliding over the ocean. Thus she had a continual change before her eyes, till at last she saw the real land to which they were bound. There arose the most glorious blue mountains, with cedar forests, cities, and palaces. Long before the sun went down she sat on the rock, in front of a great cave overgrown with delicate green trailing plants looking like embroidered carpets.

"Now we shall see what you will dream of here to-night," said the youngest brother; and he showed her to her bed-chamber.

"Heaven grant that I may dream of a way to release you," she replied.

And this thought possessed her mightily, and she prayed ardently for help; yes, even in her sleep she continued to pray. Then it seemed to her as if she were flying high in the air to the cloudy palace of Fata Morgana; and the fairy came out to meet her, beautiful and radiant; and yet the fairy was quite like the old woman who had given her the berries in the wood, and had told her of the swans with golden crowns on their heads.

"Your brothers can be released," said she. "But have you courage and perseverance? Certainly, water is softer than your delicate hands, and yet it changes the shape of stones; but it feels not the pain that your fingers will feel; it has no heart, and cannot suffer the agony and torment you will have to endure. Do you see the stinging-nettle which I hold in my hand? Many of the same kind grow around the cave in which you sleep: those only, and those that grow upon churchyard graves, are serviceable, remember that. Those you must pluck, though they burn your hands to blisters. Break these nettles into pieces with your feet, and you will have flax; of this you must plait and weave eleven shirts of mail with long sleeves: throw these over the eleven swans, and the charm will be broken. But recollect well, from the moment you begin this work until it is finished, even though it should take years to accomplish, you must not speak. The first word you utter will pierce your brothers' hearts like a deadly dagger. Their lives hang on your tongue. Remember all this!"

And she touched her hand with the nettle; it was like a burning fire, and Eliza woke with the smart. It was

broad daylight; and close by the spot where she had slept lay a nettle like the one she had seen in her dream. She fell upon her knees and prayed gratefully, and went forth from the cave to begin her work.

With her delicate hands she groped among the ugly nettles. These stung like fire, burning great blisters on her arms and hands; but she thought she would bear it gladly if she could only release her dear brothers. Then she bruised every nettle with her bare feet and plaited the green flax.

When the sun had set her brothers came, and they were frightened when they found her dumb. They thought it was some new sorcery of their wicked step-mother's; but when they saw her hands, they understood what she was doing for their sake, and the youngest brother wept. And where his tears dropped she felt no more pain, and the burning blisters vanished.

She passed the night at her work, for she could not sleep till she had delivered her dear brothers. The whole of the following day, while the swans were away, she sat in solitude, but never had time flown so quickly with her as now. One shirt of mail was already finished, and now she began the second.

Then a hunting horn sounded among the hills, and she was struck with fear. The noise came nearer and nearer; she heard the barking dogs, and timidly she fled into the cave, bound into a bundle the nettles she had collected and prepared, and sat on the bundle.

Immediately a great dog came bounding out of the ravine, and then another, and another: they barked loudly, ran back, and then came again. Only a few minutes had gone before all the huntsmen stood before

the cave, and the handsomest of them was the King of the country. He came forward to Eliza, for he had never seen a more beautiful maiden.

"How did you come hither, you delightful child?" he asked.

Eliza shook her head, for she might not speak—it would cost her brothers their deliverance and their lives. And she hid her hands under her apron, so that the King might not see what she was suffering.

"Come with me," said he. "You cannot stop here. If you are as good as you are beautiful, I will dress you in velvet and silk, and place the golden crown on your head, and you shall dwell in my richest castle, and rule."

And then he lifted her on his horse. She wept and wrung her hands; but the King said:

"I only wish for your happiness: one day you will thank me for this."

And then he galloped away among the mountains with her on his horse, and the hunters galloped at their heels.

When the sun went down, the fair regal city lay before them, with its churches and cupolas; and the King led her into the castle, where great fountains plashed in the lofty marble halls, and where walls and ceilings were covered with glorious pictures. But she had no eyes for all this—she only wept and mourned. Passively she let the women put royal robes upon her, and weave pearls in her hair, and draw dainty gloves over her blistered fingers.

When she stood there in full array, she was dazzlingly beautiful, so that the Court bowed deeper than ever. And the King chose her for his bride, although the archbishop shook his head and whispered that the

beauteous fresh maid was certainly a witch, who blinded the eyes and led astray the heart of the King.

But the King gave no ear to this, but ordered that the music should sound, and the costliest dishes should be served, and the most beautiful maidens should dance before them. And she was led through fragrant gardens into gorgeous halls; but never a smile came upon her lips or shone in her eyes: there she stood, a picture of grief. Then the King opened a little chamber close by where she was to sleep. This chamber was decked with splendid green tapestry, and completely resembled the cave in which she had been. On the floor lay the bundle of flax which she had prepared from the nettles, and under the ceiling hung the shirt of mail she had completed. All these things one of the huntsmen had brought with him as curiosities.

"Here you may dream yourself back in your former home," said the King. "Here is the work which occupied you there, and now, in the midst of all your splendour, it will amuse you to think of that time."

When Eliza saw this that lay so near her heart, a smile played round her mouth and the crimson blood came back into her cheeks. She thought of her brothers' deliverance, and kissed the King's hand; and he pressed her to his heart, and caused the marriage feast to be announced by all the church bells. The beautiful dumb girl out of the wood became the Queen of the country.

Then the archbishop whispered evil words into the King's ear, but they did not sink into the King's heart. The marriage was to take place; the archbishop himself was obliged to place the crown upon her head, and with

wicked spite he pressed the narrow circlet so tightly upon her brow that it pained her. But a heavier ring lay close around her heart—sorrow for her brothers; she did not feel the bodily pain. Her mouth was dumb, for a single word would cost her brothers their lives, but her eyes glowed with love for the kind, handsome King, who did everything to rejoice her. She loved him with her whole heart, more and more every day. Oh that she had been able to confide in him to tell him of her grief! But she was compelled to be dumb, and finish her work in silence. Therefore at night she crept away from his side, and went quietly to the little chamber which was decorated like the cave, and wove one shirt of mail after another. But when she began the seventh she had no flax left.

She knew that in the churchyard nettles were growing that she could use; but she must pluck them herself, and how was she to go out there?

"Oh, what is the pain in my fingers to the torment my heart endures?" thought she. "I must venture it, and help will not be denied me!"

With a trembling heart, as though the deed she purposed doing had been evil, she crept into the garden in the moonlight night, and went through the lanes and through the deserted streets to the churchyard. There, on one of the broadest tombstones, she saw sitting a circle of lamias. These hideous wretches took off their ragged garments, as if they were going to bathe; then with their skinny fingers they clawed open the fresh graves, and with fiendish greed they snatched up the corpses and ate the flesh. Eliza was obliged to pass close by them, and they fastened their evil glances upon

her; but she prayed silently, and collected the burning nettles, and carried them into the castle.

Only one person had seen her, and that was the archbishop. He was awake while others slept. Now he felt sure his opinion was correct, that all was not as it should be with the Queen; she was a witch, and thus she had bewitched the King and the whole people.

In secret he told the King what he had seen and what he feared; and when the hard words came from his tongue, the pictures of saints in the cathedral shook their heads, as though they could have said, "It is not so! Eliza is innocent!" But the archbishop interpreted this differently—he thought they were bearing witness against her, and shaking their heads at her sinfulness. Then two heavy tears rolled down the King's cheeks; he went home with doubt in his heart, and at night pretended to be asleep; but no quiet sleep came upon his eyes, for he noticed that Eliza got up. Every night she did this, and each time he followed her silently, and saw how she disappeared from her chamber.

From day to day his face became darker. Eliza saw it, but did not understand the reason; but it frightened her—and what did she not suffer in her heart for her brothers? Her hot tears flowed upon the royal velvet and purple; they lay there like sparkling diamonds, and all who saw the splendour wished they were Queens. In the meantime she had almost finished her work. Only one shirt of mail was still to be completed, but she had no flax left, and not a single nettle. Once more, for the last time, therefore, she must go to the churchyard, only to pluck a few handfuls. She thought with terror of this solitary wandering and of the horrible

lamias, but her will was firm as her trust in Providence.

Eliza went on, but the King and the archbishop followed her. They saw her vanish into the churchyard through the wicket gate; and when they drew near, the lamias were sitting upon the gravestones as Eliza had seen them; and the King turned aside, for he fancied her among them, whose head had rested against his breast that very evening.

"The people must condemn her," said he.

And the people condemned her to suffer death by fire.

Out of the gorgeous regal halls she was led into a dark damp cell, where the wind whistled through the grated window; instead of velvet and silk they gave her the bundle of nettles which she had collected: on this she could lay her head; and the hard burning coats of mail which she had woven were to be her coverlet. But nothing could have been given her that she liked better. She resumed her work and prayed. Without, the street boys were singing jeering songs about her, and not a soul comforted her with a kind word.

But toward evening there came the whirling of swans' wings close by the grating—it was the youngest of her brothers. He had found his sister, and she sobbed aloud with joy, though she knew that the approaching night would probably be the last she had to live. But now the work was almost finished, and her brothers were here.

Now came the archbishop, to stay with her in her last hour, for he had promised the King to do so. And she shook her head, and with looks and gestures she begged him to depart, for in this night she must finish her work,

or else all would be in vain, all her tears, her pain, and her sleepless nights. The archbishop withdrew uttering evil words against her; but poor Eliza knew she was innocent, and continued her work.

It was still twilight; not till an hour afterward would the sun rise. And the eleven brothers stood at the castle gate, and demanded to be brought before the King. That could not be, they were told, for it was still almost night; the King was asleep, and might not be disturbed. They begged, they threatened, and the sentries came, yes, even the King himself came out, and asked what was the meaning of this. At that moment the sun rose, and no more were the brothers to be seen, but eleven wild swans flew away over the castle.

All the people came flocking out at the town gate, for they wanted to see the witch burned. The old horse drew the cart on which she sat. They had put upon her a garment of coarse sackcloth. Her lovely hair hung loose about her beautiful head; her cheeks were as pale as death; and her lips moved silently, while her fingers were engaged with the green flax. Even on the way to death she did not interrupt the work she had begun; the ten shirts of mail lay at her feet, and she wrought at the eleventh. The mob derided her.

"Look at the red witch, how she mutters! She has no hymn-book in her hand; no, there she sits with her ugly sorcery—tear it in a thousand pieces!"

And they all pressed upon her, and wanted to tear up the shirts of mail. Then eleven wild swans came flying up, and sat round about her on the cart, and beat with their wings; and the mob gave way before them, terrified.

"That is a sign from heaven! She is certainly innocent!" whispered many. But they did not dare to say it aloud.

Now the executioner seized her by the hand; then she hastily threw the eleven shirts over the swans, and immediately eleven handsome Princes stood there. But the youngest had a swan's wing instead of an arm, for a sleeve was wanting to his shirt—she had not quite finished it.

"Now I may speak!" she said. "I am innocent!"

And the people who saw what happened bowed before her as before a saint; but she sank lifeless into her brothers' arms, such an effect had suspense, anguish, and pain had upon her.

"Yes, she is innocent," said the eldest brother.

And now he told everything that had taken place; and while he spoke a fragrance arose as of millions of roses, for every piece of faggot in the pile had taken root and was sending forth shoots; and a fragrant hedge stood there, tall and great, covered with red roses, and at the top a flower, white and shining, gleaming like a star. This flower the King plucked and placed in Eliza's bosom; and she awoke with peace and happiness in her heart.

And all the church bells rang of themselves, and the birds came in great flocks. And back to the castle such a marriage procession was held as no King had ever seen.

THE GOLOSHES OF FORTUNE

I. A BEGINNING

IN a house in Copenhagen, not far from the King's New Market, a company—a very large company—had assembled, having received invitations to an evening party there. One half of the company already sat at the card tables, the other half awaited the result of the hostess's question, "What shall we do now?" They had progressed so far, and the entertainment began to take some degree of animation. Among other subjects the conversation turned upon the Middle Ages. Some considered that period much more interesting than our own times: yes, Councillor Knap defended this view so zealously that the lady of the house went over at once to his side; and both loudly exclaimed against Oersted's treatise in the Almanac on old and modern times, in which the chief advantage is given to our own day. The councillor considered the times of the Danish King Hans as the noblest and happiest age.

While the conversation takes this turn, only interrupted for a moment by the arrival of a newspaper, which contained nothing worth reading, we will betake ourselves to the ante-chamber, where the cloaks, sticks, and goloshes had found a place. Here sat two maids—an old one and a young one. One would have thought they had come to escort their mistresses home; but, on looking at them more closely, the observer could see that

they were not ordinary servants: their shapes were too graceful for that, their complexions too delicate, and the cut of their dresses too uncommon. They were two fairies. The younger was not Fortune, but lady's maid to one of her ladies of the bedchamber, who carry about the more trifling gifts of Fortune. The elder one looked somewhat more gloomy—she was Care, who always goes herself in her own exalted person to perform her business, for thus she knows that it is well done.

They were telling each other where they had been that day. The messenger of Fortune had only transacted a few unimportant affairs, as, for instance, she had preserved a new bonnet from a shower of rain, had procured an honest man a bow from a titled Nobody, and so on; but what she had still to relate was something quite extraordinary.

"I can likewise tell," said she, "that to-day is my birthday; and in honour of it a pair of goloshes has been entrusted to me, which I am to bring to the human race. These goloshes have the property that every one who puts them on is at once transported to the time and place in which he likes best to be—every wish in reference to time, place, and circumstance is at once fulfilled; and so for once man can be happy here below!"

"Believe me," said Care, "he will be very unhappy, and will bless the moment when he can get rid of the goloshes again."

"What are you thinking of?" retorted the other. "Now I shall put them at the door. Somebody will take them by mistake, and become the happy one!"

You see, that was the dialogue they held.

II. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE COUNCILLOR

It was late. Councillor Knap, lost in contemplation of the times of King Hans, wished to get home; and fate willed that instead of his own goloshes he should put on those of Fortune, and thus go out into the East Street. But by the power of the goloshes he had been put back three hundred years—into the days of King Hans; and therefore he put his foot into mud and mire in the street, because in those days there was not any pavement.

"Why, this is horrible—how dirty it is here!" said the councillor. "The good pavement is gone, and all the lamps are put out."

The moon did not yet stand high enough to give much light; and the air was tolerably thick, so that all objects seemed to melt together in the darkness. At the next corner a lamp hung before a picture of the Madonna, but the light it gave was as good as none; he only noticed it when he stood just under it, and his eyes fell upon the painted figure.

"That is probably a museum of art," thought he, "where they have forgotten to take down the sign."

A couple of men in the costume of those past days went by him.

"How odd they look!" he said. "They must come from a masquerade."

Suddenly there was a sound of drums and fifes, and torches gleamed brightly. The councillor started. And now he saw a strange procession go past. First came a whole troop of drummers beating their instruments very dexterously; they were followed by men-at-arms, with longbows and crossbows. The chief man in

the procession was a clerical lord. The astonished councillor asked what was the meaning of this, and who the man might be.

"That is the Bishop of Zealand."

"What in the world has come to the bishop?" said the councillor with a sigh, shaking his head. "This could not possibly be the bishop!"

Ruminating on this, and without looking to the right or to the left, the councillor went through the East Street, and over the Highbridge Place. The bridge which led to the Palace Square was not to be found; he perceived the shore of a shallow water, and at length encountered two people who sat in a boat.

"Do you wish to be ferried over to the Holm, sir?" they asked.

"To the Holm!" repeated the councillor, who did not know, you see, in what period he was. "I want to go to Christian's Haven and to Little Turf Street."

The men stared at him.

"Pray tell me where the bridge is?" said he. "It is shameful that no lanterns are lighted here; and it is as muddy, too, as if one were walking in a marsh." But the longer he talked with the boatmen the less could he understand them. "I don't understand your Bornholm talk," he at last cried angrily, and turned his back upon them. He could not find the bridge, nor was there any paling. "It is quite scandalous how things look here!" he said. Never had he thought his own times so miserable as this evening. "I think it will be best if I take a cab," thought he. But where were the cabs? Not one was to be seen. "I shall have to go back to the King's New Market, where there are many carriages standing, otherwise I shall never get as far as Christian's Haven."

Now he went toward East Street, and had almost gone through it when the moon burst forth.

"What in the world have they been erecting here?" he exclaimed, when he saw the East Gate, which in those days stood at the end of East Street.

In the meantime, however, he found a passage open, and through this he came out upon our New Market; but it was a broad meadow. Single bushes stood forth, and across the meadow ran a great canal or stream. A few miserable wooden booths for Dutch skippers were erected on the opposite shore.

"Either I behold a *Fata Morgana*, or I am tipsy," sighed the councillor. "What can that be? What can that be?"

He turned back, in the full persuasion that he must be ill. In walking up the street he looked more closely at the houses; most of them were built of laths, and many were only thatched with straw.

"No, I don't feel well at all!" he lamented. "And yet I only drank one glass of punch! But I cannot stand that; and besides, it was very foolish to give us punch and warm salmon. I shall mention that to our hostess—the agent's lady. Suppose I go back, and say how I feel? But that looks ridiculous, and it is a question if they will be up still."

He looked for the house, but could not find it.

"That is dreadful!" he cried; "I don't know East Street again. Not one shop is to be seen; old, miserable, tumbledown huts are all I see, as if I were at Roeskilde or Ringstedt. Oh, I am ill! It's no use to make ceremony. But where in all the world is the agent's house? It is no longer the same; but within there are people up still. I certainly must be ill!"

He now reached a half-open door, where the light shone through a chink. It was a tavern of that date—a kind of beer-house. The room had the appearance of a Dutch wine-shop; a number of people, consisting of seamen, citizens of Copenhagen, and a few scholars, sat in deep conversation over their jugs, and paid little attention to the new-comer.

“I beg pardon,” said the councillor to the hostess, “but I feel very unwell; would you let them get me a fly to go to Christian’s Haven?”

The woman looked at him and shook her head; then she spoke to him in German.

The councillor now supposed that she did not understand Danish, so he repeated his wish in the German language. This, and his costume, convinced the woman that he was a foreigner. She soon understood that he felt unwell, and therefore brought him a jug of water. It certainly tasted a little of sea-water, though it had been taken from the spring outside.

The councillor leaned his head on his hand, drew a deep breath, and thought of all the strange things that were happening about him.

“Is that to-day’s number of the *Day*?” he said, quite mechanically, for he saw that the woman was putting away a large sheet of paper.

She did not understand what he meant, but handed him the leaf: it was a woodcut representing a strange appearance in the air which had been seen in the city of Cologne.

“That is very old!” said the councillor, who became quite cheerful at sight of this antiquity. “How did you come by this strange leaf? That is very interesting,

although the whole thing is a fable. Nowadays these appearances are explained to be Northern Lights that have been seen; probably they arise from electricity."

Those who sat nearest to him and heard his speech looked at him in surprise, and one of them rose, took off his hat respectfully, and said, with a very grave face:

"You must certainly be a very learned man, sir!"

"Oh, no!" replied the councillor; "I can only say a word or two about things one ought to understand."

"*Modestia* is a beautiful virtue," said the man. "Moreover, I must say to your speech, '*mihi secus videtur*'; yet I will gladly suspend my *judicium*."

"May I ask with whom I have the pleasure of speaking?" asked the councillor.

"I am a bachelor of theology," replied the man.

This answer sufficed for the councillor; the title corresponded with the garb.

"Certainly," he thought, "this must be an old village schoolmaster, a queer character, such as one finds sometimes over in Jutland."

"This is certainly not a *locus docendi*," began the man; "but I beg you to take the trouble to speak. You are doubtless well read in the ancients?"

"Oh, yes," replied the councillor. "I am fond of reading useful old books; and am fond of the modern ones too, with the exception of the 'Every-day Stories,' of which we have enough, in all conscience."

"Every-day Stories?" said the bachelor inquiringly.

"Yes, I mean the new romances we have now."

"Oh!" said the man, with a smile, "they are very witty, and are much read at court. The King is especially partial to the romance by Messieurs Iffven and

Gaudian, which talks about King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. He has jested about it with his noble lords."

"That I have certainly not yet read," said the councillor: "that must be quite a new book published by Heiberg."

"No," retorted the man, "it is not published by Heiberg, but by Godfrey von Gehmen.¹

"Indeed! is he the author?" asked the councillor. "That is a very old name: was not that the name of about the first printer who appeared in Denmark?"

"Why, he *is* our first printer," replied the man.

So far it had gone well. But now one of the men began to speak of a pestilence which he said had been raging a few years ago: he meant the plague of 1484. The councillor supposed that he meant the cholera, and so the conversation went on tolerably. The Freebooters' War of 1490 was so recent that it could not escape mention. The English pirates had taken ships from the very wharves, said the man; and the councillor, who was well acquainted with the events of 1801, joined in manfully against the English. The rest of the talk, however, did not pass over so well; every moment there was a contradiction. The good bachelor was terribly ignorant, and the simplest assertion of the councillor seemed too bold or too fantastic. They looked at each other, and when it became too bad, the bachelor spoke Latin, in the hope that he would be better understood; but it was of no use.

"How are you now?" asked the hostess, and she plucked the councillor by the sleeve.

Now his recollection came back: in the course of the

¹ The first printer and publisher in Denmark, under King Hans.

conversation he had forgotten everything that had happened.

"Good heavens! where am I?" he said, and he felt dizzy when he thought of it.

"We'll drink claret, mead, and Bremen beer," cried one of the guests, "and you shall drink with us."

Two girls came in. One of them had on a cap of two colours. They poured out drink and bowed: the councillor felt a cold shudder running all down his back. "What's that? What's that?" he cried; but he was obliged to drink with them. They took possession of the good man quite politely. He was in despair, and when one said that he was tipsy he felt not the slightest doubt regarding the truth of the statement, and only begged them to procure him a droshky. Now they thought he was speaking Muscovite.

Never had he been in such rude vulgar company.

"One would think the country was falling back into heathenism," was his reflection. "This is the most terrible moment of my life."

But at the same time the idea occurred to him to bend down under the table, and then to creep to the door. He did so; but just as he had reached the entry the others discovered his intention. They seized him by the feet; and now the goloshes, to his great good fortune, came off, and—the whole enchantment vanished.

The councillor saw quite plainly, in front of him, a lamp burning, and behind it a great building; everything looked familiar and splendid. It was East Street, as we know it now. He lay with his legs turned toward a porch, and opposite to him sat the watchman asleep.

"Good heavens! have I been lying here in the street

dreaming?" he exclaimed. "Yes, this is East Street sure enough! How splendidly bright and gay! It is terrible what an effect that one glass of punch must have had on me!"

Two minutes afterward he was sitting in a fly, which drove him out to Christian's Haven. He thought of the terror and anxiety he had undergone, and praised from his heart the happy present, our own time, which, with all its shortcomings, was far better than the period in which he had been placed a short time before.

III. THE WATCHMAN'S ADVENTURES

"ON my word, yonder lies a pair of goloshes!" said the watchman. "They must certainly belong to the lieutenant who lives upstairs. They are lying close to the door."

The honest man would gladly have rung the bell and delivered them, for upstairs there was a light still burning; but he did not wish to disturb the other people in the house, and so he let it alone.

"It must be very warm to have a pair of such things on," said he. "How nice and soft the leather is!" They fitted his feet very well. "How droll it is in the world! Now he might lie down in his warm bed, and yet he does not! There he is pacing up and down the room. He is a happy man! He has neither wife nor children, and every evening he is at a party. Oh, I wish I were he, then I should be a happy man!"

As he uttered the wish, the goloshes he had put on produced their effect, and the watchman was transported into the body and being of the lieutenant. Then he stood up in the room, and held a little pink paper in his

fingers, on which was a poem, a poem written by the lieutenant himself. For who is there who has not once in his life had a poetic moment? And at such a moment, if one writes down one's thoughts, there is poetry.

Yes, people write poetry when they are in love; but a prudent man does not print such poems. The lieutenant was in love—and poor—that's a triangle, or, so to speak, the half of a broken square of happiness. The lieutenant felt that very keenly, and so he laid his head against the window-frame and sighed a deep sigh.

"The poor watchman in the street yonder is far happier than I. He does not know what I call want. He has a home, a wife, and children, who weep at his sorrow and rejoice at his joy. Oh! I should be happier than I am, could I change my being for his, and pass through life with his humble desires and hopes. Yes, he is happier than I!"

In that same moment the watchman became a watchman again; for through the power of the goloshes of Fortune he had assumed the personality of the lieutenant; but then we know he felt far less content, and preferred to be just what he had despised a short time before. So the watchman became a watchman again.

"That was an ugly dream," said he, "but droll enough. It seemed to me that I was the lieutenant up yonder, and that it was not pleasant at all. I was without the wife and the boys, who are now ready to half stifle me with kisses."

He sat down again and nodded. The dream would not go quite out of his thoughts. He had the goloshes still on his feet. A falling star glided down along the horizon.

"There went one," said he, "but for all that, there are

enough left. I should like to look at those things a little nearer, especially the moon, for that won't vanish under one's hands. The student for whom my wife washes says that when we die we fly from one star to another. That's not true, but it would be very nice. If I could only make a little spring up there, then my body might lie here on the stairs for all I care."

Now there are certain assertions we should be very cautious of making in this world, but doubly careful when we have goloshes of Fortune on our feet. Just hear what happened to the watchman.

So far as we are concerned, we all understand the rapidity of dispatch by steam; we have tried it either in railways, or in steamers across the sea. But this speed is as the crawling of the sloth or the march of the snail in comparison with the swiftness with which light travels. That flies nineteen million times quicker. Death is an electric shock which we receive in our hearts, and on the wings of electricity the liberated soul flies away. The sunlight requires eight minutes and a few seconds for a journey of more than ninety-five millions of miles; on the wings of electric power the soul requires only a few moments to accomplish the same flight. The space between the orbs of the universe is, for her, not greater than, for us, the distances between the houses of our friends dwelling in the same town and even living close together. Yet this electric shock costs us the life of the body here below, unless, like the watchman we have the magic goloshes on.

In a few seconds the watchman had traversed the distance of two hundred and sixty thousand miles to the moon, which body, as we know, consists of a much lighter material than that of our earth, and is, as we

should say, soft as new-fallen snow. He found himself on one of the many ring mountains with which we are familiar from Dr. Madler's great map of the moon. Within the ring a great bowl-shaped hollow went down to the depth of a couple of miles. At the base of the hollow lay a town, of whose appearance we can only form an idea by pouring the white of an egg into a glass of water: the substance here was just as soft as white of egg, and formed similar towers, and cupolas, and terraces like sails, transparent and floating in the thin air. Our earth hung over his head like a great dark red ball.

He immediately became aware of a number of beings, who were certainly what we call 'men,' but their appearance was very different from ours. If they had been put up in a row and painted, one would have said, "That's a beautiful arabesque!" They had also a language, but no one could expect that the soul of the watchman should understand it. But the watchman's soul did understand it, for our souls have far greater abilities than we suppose. Does not its wonderful dramatic talent show itself in our dreams? Then every one of our acquaintances appears speaking in his own character and with his own voice, in a way that not one of us could imitate in our waking hours. How does our soul bring back to us people of whom we have not thought for many years? Suddenly they come into our souls with their smallest peculiarities about them. In fact, it is a fearful thing, that memory which our souls possess: it can reproduce every sin, every bad thought. And then, it may be asked, shall we be able to give an account of every idle word that has been in our hearts and on our lips?

Thus the watchman's soul understood the language

of the people in the moon very well. They disputed about this earth, and doubted if it could be inhabited; the air, they asserted, must be too thick for a sensible moon-man to live there. They considered that the moon alone was peopled; for that, they said, was the real body in which the old-world people dwelt. They also talked of politics.

But let us go down to the East Street, and see how it fared with the body of the watchman.

He sat lifeless upon the stairs. His pike had fallen out of his hand, and his eyes stared up at the moon, which his honest body was wondering about.

"What's o'clock, watchman?" asked a passer-by. But the man who didn't answer was the watchman. Then the passengers tweaked him quite gently by the nose, and then he lost his balance. There lay the body stretched out at full length—the man was dead. All his comrades were very much frightened: dead he was, and dead he remained. It was reported, and it was discussed, and in the morning the body was carried out to the hospital.

That would be a pretty jest for the soul if it should chance to come back, and probably seek its body in the East Street, and not find it! Most likely it would go first to the police and afterward to the address office, that inquiries might be made from thence respecting the missing goods; and then it would wander out to the hospital. But we may console ourselves with the idea that the soul is most clever when it acts upon its own account; it is the body that makes it stupid.

As we have said, the watchman's body was taken to the hospital, and brought into the washing-room; and naturally enough the first thing they did there was to

pull off the goloshes; and then the soul had to come back. It took its way directly toward the body, and in a few seconds there was life in the man. He declared that this had been the most terrible night of his life; he would not have such feelings again, not for a shilling; but now it was past and over.

The same day he was allowed to leave; but the goloshes remained at the hospital.

IV. A GREAT MOMENT—A VERY UNUSUAL JOURNEY

EVERY one who belongs to Copenhagen knows the look of the entrance to the Frederick's Hospital in Copenhagen; but as, perhaps, a few will read this story who do not belong to Copenhagen, it becomes necessary to give a short description of it.

The hospital is separated from the street by a tolerably high railing, in which the thick iron rails stand so far apart that certain very thin inmates are said to have squeezed between them, and thus paid their little visits outside the premises. The part of the body most difficult to get through was the head; and here, as it often happens in the world, small heads were the most fortunate. This will be sufficient as an introduction.

One of the young volunteers, of whom one could only say in one sense that he had a great head, had the watch that evening. The rain was pouring down; but in spite of this obstacle he wanted to go out, only for a quarter of an hour. It was needless, he thought, to tell the porter of his wish, especially if he could slip through between the rails. There lay the goloshes which the watchman had forgotten. It never occurred to him in the least that they were goloshes of Fortune. They

would do him very good service in this rainy weather, and he pulled them on. Now the question was whether he could squeeze through the bars; till now he had never tried it. There he stood.

"I wish to goodness I had my head outside!" cried he. And immediately, though his head was very thick and big, it glided easily and quickly through. The goloshes must have understood it well; but now the body was to slip through also, and that could not be done.

"I'm too fat," said he. "I thought my head was the thickest. I shan't get through."

Now he wanted to pull his head back quickly, but he could not manage it: he could move his neck, but that was all. His first feeling was one of anger, and then his spirits sank down to zero. The goloshes of Fortune had placed him in this terrible condition, and, unfortunately, it never occurred to him to wish himself free. No: instead of wishing, he only strove, and could not stir from the spot. The rain poured down; not a creature was to be seen in the street; he could not reach the gate bell, and how was he to get loose? He foresaw that he would have to remain here until the morning, and then they would have to send for a blacksmith, to file through the iron bars. But such a business is not to be done quickly. The whole charity school would be upon its legs; the whole sailors' quarter close by would come up and see him standing in the pillory; and a fine crowd there would be.

"Hu!" he cried, "the blood's rising to my head, and I shall go mad! Yes, I'm going mad! If I were free, most likely it would pass over."

That's what he ought to have said at first. The very moment he had uttered the thought his head was free;

and now he rushed in, quite dazed with the fright the goloshes of Fortune had given him. But we must not think the whole affair was over; there was much worse to come yet.

The night passed away, and the following day too, and nobody sent for the goloshes. In the evening a display of oratory was to take place in an amateur theatre in a distant street. The house was crammed; and among the audience was the volunteer from the hospital, who appeared to have forgotten his adventure of the previous evening. He had the goloshes on, for they had not been sent for; and as it was dirty in the streets, they might do him good service. A new piece was recited: it was called "My Aunt's Spectacles." These were spectacles which, when any one put them on in a great assembly of people, made all present look like cards, so that one could prophesy from them all that would happen in the coming year.

The idea struck him: he would have liked to possess such a pair of spectacles. If they were used rightly, they would perhaps enable the wearer to look into people's hearts; and that, he thought, would be more interesting than to see what was going to happen in the next year; for future events would be known in time, but the people's thoughts never.

"Now I'll look at the row of ladies and gentlemen on the first bench: if one could look directly into their hearts! Yes, that must be a hollow, a sort of shop. How my eyes would wander about in that shop! In every lady's yonder, I should doubtless find a great milliner's warehouse: with this one here the shop is empty, but it would do no harm to have it cleaned out. But would there really be such shops? Ah, yes!" he con-

tinued, sighing, "I know one in which all the goods are first-rate, but there's a servant in it already; that's the only drawback in the whole shop! From one and another the word would be 'Please to step in!' Oh that I might only step in, like a neat little thought, and slip through their hearts!"

That was the word of command for the goloshes. The volunteer shrivelled up, and began to take a very remarkable journey through the hearts of the first row of spectators. The first heart through which he passed was that of a lady; but he immediately fancied himself in the Orthopædic Institute, in the room where the plaster casts of deformed limbs are kept hanging against the walls; the only difference was, that these casts were formed in the Institute when the patients came in, but here in the heart they were formed and preserved after the good persons had gone away. For they were casts of female friends, whose bodily and mental faults were preserved here.

Quickly he had passed into another female heart. But this seemed to him like a great holy church; the white dove of innocence fluttered over the high altar. Gladly would he have sunk down on his knees; but he was obliged to go away into the next heart. Still, however, he heard the tones of the organ, and it seemed to him that he himself had become another and a better man. He felt himself not unworthy to enter into the next sanctuary, which showed itself in the form of a poor garret, containing a sick mother. But through the window the warm sun streamed in, and two sky-blue birds sang full of childlike joy, while the sick mother prayed for a blessing on her daughter.

Now he crept on his hands and knees through an over-

filled butcher's shop. There was meat, and nothing but meat, wherever he went. It was the heart of a rich respectable man, whose name is certainly to be found in the address book.

Now he was in the heart of this man's wife: this heart was an old dilapidated pigeon-house. The husband's portrait was used as a mere weathercock: it stood in connexion with the doors, and these doors opened and shut according as the husband turned.

Then he came into a cabinet of mirrors, such as we find in the castle of Rosenberg; but the mirrors magnified in a great degree. In the middle of the floor sat, like a Grand Lama, the insignificant *I* of the proprietor, astonished in the contemplation of his own greatness.

Then he fancied himself transported into a narrow needle-case full of pointed needles; and he thought, "This must decidedly be the heart of an old maid!" But that was not the case. It was a young officer, wearing several orders, and of whom one said, "He's a man of intellect and heart."

Quite confused was the poor volunteer when he emerged from the heart of the last person in the first row. He could not arrange his thoughts, and fancied it must be his powerful imagination which had run away with him.

"Gracious powers!" he sighed, "I must certainly have a great tendency to go mad. It is also unconscionably hot in here: the blood is rising to my head!"

And now he remembered the great event of the last evening, how his head had been caught between the iron rails of the hospital.

"That's where I must have caught it," thought he.

"I must do something at once. A Russian bath might be very good. I wish I were lying on the highest board in the bath-house."

And there he lay on the highest board in the vapour bath; but he was lying there in all his clothes, in boots and goloshes, and the hot drops from the ceiling were falling on his face.

"Hi!" he cried, and jumped down to take a plunge bath.

The attendant uttered a loud cry on seeing a person there with all his clothes on. The volunteer had, however, enough presence of mind to whisper to him. "It's for a wager!" But the first thing he did when he got into his own room was to put a big blister on the nape of his neck, and another on his back, that they might draw out his madness.

Next morning he had a very sore back; and that was all he had got by the goloshes of Fortune.

V. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE COPYING CLERK

THE watchman, whom we surely have not yet forgotten, in the meantime thought of the goloshes which he had found and brought to the hospital. He took them away; but as neither the lieutenant nor any one in the street would own them, they were taken to the police office.

"They look exactly like my own goloshes," said one of the copying gentlemen, as he looked at the unowned articles and put them beside his own. "More than a shoemaker's eye is required to distinguish them from one another."

"Mr. Copying Clerk," said a servant, coming in with some papers.

The copying clerk turned and spoke to the man: when he had done this, he turned to look at the goloshes again; he was in great doubt if the right-hand or the left-hand pair belonged to him.

"It must be those that are wet," he thought. Now here he thought wrong, for these were the goloshes of Fortune; but why should not the police be sometimes mistaken? He put them on, thrust his papers into his pocket, and put a few manuscripts under his arm, for they were to be read at home, and abstracts to be made from them. But now it was Sunday morning, and the weather was fine. "A walk to Fredericksburg would do me good," said he; and he went out accordingly.

There could not be a quieter, steadier person than this young man. We grant him his little walk with all our hearts; it will certainly do him good after so much sitting. At first he only walked like a vegetating creature, so the goloshes had no opportunity of displaying their magic power.

In the avenue he met an acquaintance, one of our younger poets, who told him that he was going to start, next day, on a summer trip.

"Are you going away again already?" asked the copying clerk. "What a happy, free man you are! You can fly wherever you like; we others have a chain to our foot."

"But it is fastened to the bread-tree!" replied the poet. "You need not be anxious for the morrow; and when you grow old you get a pension."

"But you are better off, after all," said the copying

clerk. "It must be a pleasure to sit and write poetry. Everybody says agreeable things to you, and then you are your own master. Ah, you should just try it, poring over the frivolous affairs in the court."

The poet shook his head; the copying clerk shook his head also: each retained his own opinion; and thus they parted.

"They are a strange race, these poets!" thought the copying clerk. "I should like to try and enter into such a nature—to become a poet myself. I am certain I should not write such complaining verses as the rest. What a splendid spring day for a poet! The air is so remarkably clear, the clouds are so beautiful, and the green smells so sweet. For many years I have not felt as I feel at this moment."

We already notice that he has become a poet. To point this out would, in most cases, be what the Germans call "mawkish." It is a foolish fancy to imagine a poet different from other people, for among the latter there may be natures more poetical than those of many an acknowledged poet. The difference is only that the poet has a better spiritual memory: his ears hold fast the feeling and the idea until they are embodied clearly and firmly in words; and the others cannot do that. But the transition from an everyday nature to that of a poet is always a transition, and as such it must be noticed in the copying clerk.

"What glorious fragrance!" he cried. "How it reminds me of the violets at Aunt Laura's! Yes, that was when I was a little boy. I have not thought of that for a long time. The good old lady! She lies yonder, by the canal. She always had a twig or a couple of green shoots in the water, let the winter be as severe

as it might. The violets bloomed, while I had to put warm farthings against the frozen window-panes to make peepholes. That was a pretty view. Out in the canal the ships were frozen in, and deserted by the whole crew; a screaming crow was the only living creature left. Then, when the spring breezes blew, it all became lively: the ice was sawn asunder amid shouting and cheers, the ships were tarred and rigged, and then they sailed away to strange lands. I remained here, and must always remain, and sit at the police office, and let others take passports for abroad. That's my fate. Oh, yes!" and he sighed deeply. Suddenly he paused. "Good Heaven! what is come to me? I never thought or felt as I do now. It must be the spring air: it is just as dizzying as it is charming!" He felt in his pockets for his papers. "These will give me something else to think of," said he, and let his eyes wander over the first leaf. There he read, "'*Dame Sigbirth; an original tragedy in five acts.*' What is that? And it is my own hand. Have I written this tragedy? '*The Intrigue on the Promenade; or, the Day of Penance.—Vaudeville.*' But where did I get that from? It must have been put into my pocket. Here is a letter. Yes, it was from the manager of the theatre; the pieces were rejected, and the letter is not at all politely worded. H'm! H'm!" said the copying clerk, and he sat down upon a bench: his thoughts were elastic; his head was quite soft. Involuntarily he grasped one of the nearest flowers; it was a common little daisy. What the botanists require several lectures to explain to us, this flower told in a minute. It told the glory of its birth; it told of the strength of the sunlight, which spread out the delicate leaves and made them give out

fragrance. Then he thought of the battles of life, which likewise awaken feelings in our breasts. Air and light are the lovers of the flower, but light is the favoured one. Toward the light it turned, and only when the light vanished the flower rolled her leaves together and slept in the embrace of the air.

"It is light that adorns me!" said the Flower.

"But the air allows you to breathe," whispered the poet's voice.

Just by him stood a boy, knocking with his stick upon the marshy ground. The drops of water spurted up among the green twigs, and the copying clerk thought of the millions of infusoria which were cast up on high with the drops, which was the same to them, in proportion to their size, as it would be to us if we were hurled high over the region of clouds. And the copying clerk thought of this, and of the great change which had taken place within him; he smiled. "I sleep and dream! It is wonderful, though, how naturally one can dream, and yet know all the time that it is a dream. I should like to be able to remember it all clearly to-morrow when I wake. I seem to myself quite unusually excited. What a clear appreciation I have of everything, and how free I feel! But I am certain that if I remember anything of it to-morrow, it will be nonsense. That has often been so with me before. It is with all the clever famous things one says and hears in dreams, as with the money of the elves under the earth; when one receives it, it is rich and beautiful, but looked at by day-light, it is nothing but stones and dried leaves. Ah!" he sighed, quite plaintively, and gazed at the chirping birds, as they sprang merrily from bough to bough,

"they are much better off than I. Flying is a noble art. Happy he who is born with wings. Yes, if I could change myself into anything, it should be into a lark."

In a moment his coat-tails and sleeves grew together and formed wings; his clothes became feathers, and his goloshes claws. He noticed it quite plainly, and laughed inwardly. "Well, now I can see that I am dreaming, but so wildly I have never dreamed before." And he flew up into the green boughs and sang; but there was no poetry in the song, for the poetic nature was gone. The goloshes, like every one who wishes to do any business thoroughly, could only do one thing at a time. He wished to be a poet, and he became one. Then he wished to be a little bird, and, in changing thus, the former peculiarity was lost.

"That is charming!" he said. "In the daytime I sit in the police office among the driest of law papers; at night I can dream that I am flying about, as a lark in the Fredericksburg Garden. One could really write quite a popular comedy upon it."

Now he flew down into the grass, turned his head in every direction, and beat with his beak upon the bending stalks of grass, which, in proportion to his size, seemed to him as long as palm branches of Northern Africa.

It was only for a moment, and then all around him became as the blackest night. It seemed to him that some immense substance was cast over him; it was a great cap, which a sailor boy threw over the bird. A hand came in and seized the copying clerk by the back and wings in a way that made him whistle. In his first terror he cried aloud, "The impudent rascal! I am

copying clerk at the police office!" But that sounded to the boy only like "piep! piep!" and he tapped the bird on the beak and wandered on with him.

In the alley the boy met with two other boys, who belonged to the educated classes, socially speaking; but, according to abilities, they ranked in the lowest class in the school. These bought the bird for a few Danish shillings; and so the copying clerk was carried back to Copenhagen.

"It's a good thing that I am dreaming," he said, "or I should become really angry. First I was a poet, and now I'm a lark! Yes, it must have been the poetic nature which transformed me into that little creature. It is a miserable state of things, especially when one falls into the hands of boys. I should like to know what the end of it will be."

The boys carried him into a very elegant room. A stout smiling lady received them. But she was not at all gratified to see the common field bird, as she called the lark, coming in too. Only for one day she would consent to it; but they must put the bird in the empty cage which stood by the window.

"Perhaps that will please Polly," she added, and laughed at a great Parrot swinging himself proudly in his ring in the handsome brass cage.

"It's Polly's birthday," she said simply, "so the little field bird shall congratulate him."

Polly did not answer a single word; he only swung proudly to and fro. But a pretty Canary bird, who had been brought here last summer out of his warm fragrant fatherland, began to sing loudly.

"Screamer!" said the lady; and she threw a white handkerchief over the cage.

"Piep! piep!" sighed he; "here's a terrible snow-storm." And thus sighing, he was silent.

The copying clerk, or, as the lady called him, the field bird, was placed in a little cage close to the Canary, and not far from the Parrot. The only human words which Polly could say, and which often sounded very comically, were "*Come, let's be men now!*" Everything else that he screamed out was just as unintelligible as the song of the Canary bird, except for the copying clerk, who was now also a bird, and who understood his comrades very well.

"I flew under the green palm-tree and the blossoming almond-tree!" sang the Canary. "I flew with my brothers and sisters over the beautiful flowers and over the bright sea, where the plants waved in the depths. I also saw many beautiful parrots, who told the merriest stories."

"Those were wild birds," replied the Parrot. "They had no education. Let us be men now! Why don't you laugh? If the lady and all the strangers could laugh at it, so can you. It is a great fault to have no taste for what is pleasant. No, let us be men now."

"Do you remember the pretty girls who danced under the tents spread out beneath the blooming trees? Do you remember the sweet fruits and the cooling juice in the wild plants?"

"Oh, yes!" replied the Parrot; "but here I am far better off. I have good care and genteel treatment. I know I've a good head, and I don't ask for more. Let us be men now. You are what they call a poetic soul. I have thorough knowledge and wit. You have genius, but no prudence. You mount up into those high natural notes of yours, and then you get covered

up. That is never done to me; no, no, for I cost them a little more. I make an impression with my beak, and can cast wit round me. Now let us be men!"

"O my poor blooming fatherland!" sang the Canary. "I will praise thy dark green trees and thy quiet bays, where the branches kiss the clear watery mirror; I'll sing of the joy of all my shining brothers and sisters, where the plants grow by the desert springs."

"Now, pray leave off these dismal tones," cried the Parrot. "Sing something at which one can laugh! Laughter is the sign of the highest mental development. Look if a dog or a horse can laugh! No: they can cry; but laughter—that is given to men alone. Ho! ho! ho!" screamed Polly, and finished the jest with, "Let us be men now."

"You little grey Northern bird," said the Canary; "so you have also become a prisoner. It is certainly cold in your woods, but still liberty is there. Fly out! they have forgotten to close your cage; the upper window is open. Fly! fly!"

Instinctively the copy clerk obeyed, and flew forth from his prison. At the same moment the half-opened door of the next room creaked, and stealthily, with fierce sparkling eyes, the house cat crept in, and made chase upon him. The Canary fluttered in its cage, the Parrot flapped its wings, and cried, "Let us be men now." The copying clerk felt mortally afraid, and flew through the window, away over the houses and streets; at last he was obliged to rest a little.

The house opposite had a homelike look: one of the windows stood open, and he flew in. It was his own room: he perched upon the table.

"Let us be men now," he broke out, involuntarily imi-

tating the Parrot; and in the same moment he was restored to the form of the copying clerk; but he was sitting on the table.

"Heaven preserve me!" he cried. "How could I have come here and fallen so soundly asleep? That was an unquiet dream, too, that I had. The whole thing was great nonsense."

VI. THE BEST THAT THE GOLOSHES BROUGHT

ON the following day, quite early in the morning, as the clerk still lay in bed, there came a tapping at his door: it was his neighbour who lodged on the same floor, a young theologian; and he came in.

"Lend me your goloshes," said he. "It is very wet in the garden, but the sun shines gloriously, and I should like to smoke a pipe down there."

He put on the goloshes, and was soon in the garden, which contained a plum-tree and an apple-tree. Even a little garden like this is highly prized in the midst of great cities.

The theologian wandered up and down the path; it was only six o'clock, and a post-horn sounded out in the street.

"Oh, travelling! travelling!" he cried out, "that's the greatest happiness in all the world. That's the highest goal of my wishes. Then this disquietude that I feel would be stilled. But it would have to be far away. I should like to see beautiful Switzerland, to travel through Italy, to——"

Yes, it was a good thing that the goloshes took effect immediately, for he might have gone too far even for himself, and for us others too. He was travelling; he

was in the midst of Switzerland, packed tightly with eight others in the interior of a diligence. He had a headache and a weary feeling in his neck, and his feet had gone to sleep, for they were swollen by the heavy boots he had on. He was hovering in a condition between sleeping and waking. In his right-hand pocket he had his letter of credit, in his left-hand pocket his passport, and a few louis d'or were sewn into a little bag he wore on his breast. Whenever he dozed off, he dreamed he had lost one or other of these possessions; and then he would start up in a feverish way, and the first movement his hand made was to describe a triangle from left to right, and toward his breast, to feel whether he still possessed them or not. Umbrellas, hats, and walking-sticks swung in the net over him, and almost took away the prospect, which was impressive enough: he glanced out at it, and his heart sang what one poet at least, whom we know, has sung in Switzerland, but has not yet printed:

'Tis a prospect as fine as heart can desire,
Before me Mont Blanc the rough:
'Tis pleasant to tarry here and admire,
If only you've money enough.

Great, grave, and dark was all nature around him. The pine woods looked like little mosses upon the high rocks, whose summits were lost in cloudy mists; and then it began to snow, and the wind blew cold.

"Hu!" he sighed; "if we were only on the other side of the Alps, then it would be summer, and I should have got money on my letter of credit: my anxiety about this prevents me from enjoying Switzerland. Oh, if I were only at the other side!"

And then he was on the other side, in the midst of Italy, between Florence and Rome. The lake Thrasy-mene lay spread out in the evening light, like flaming gold among the dark blue hills. Here, where Hannibal beat Flaminius, the grape-vines held each other by their green fingers; pretty half-naked children were keeping a herd of coal-black pigs under a clump of fragrant laurels by the wayside. If we could reproduce this scene accurately, all would cry, "Glorious Italy!" But neither the theologian nor any of his travelling companions in the carriage of the *vetturino* thought this.

Poisonous flies and gnats flew into the carriage by thousands. In vain they beat the air frantically with a myrtle branch—the flies stung them nevertheless. There was not one person in the carriage whose face was not swollen and covered with stings. The poor horses looked miserable, the flies tormented them woe-fully, and it only mended the matter for a moment when the coachman dismounted and scraped them clean from the insects that sat upon them in great swarms. Now the sun sank down; a short but icy coldness pervaded all nature; it was like the cold air of a funeral vault after the sultry summer day; and all around the hills and clouds put on that remarkable green tone which we notice on some old pictures, and consider unnatural unless we have ourselves witnessed a similar play of colour. It was a glorious spectacle; but the stomachs of all were empty and their bodies exhausted, and every wish of the heart turned toward a resting-place for the night; but how could that be won? To descry this resting-place all eyes were turned more eagerly to the road than toward the beauties of nature.

The way now led through an olive wood: he could

have fancied himself passing between knotty willow trunks at home. Here, by the solitary inn, a dozen crippled beggars had taken up their positions: the quickest among them looked, to quote an expression of Marryat's, like the eldest son of Famine, who had just come of age. The others were either blind or had withered legs, so that they crept about on their hands, or they had withered arms with fingerless hands. This was misery in rags indeed. "*Eccellenza, miserabili!*" they sighed, and stretched forth their diseased limbs. The hostess herself, in untidy hair, and dressed in a dirty blouse, received her guests. The doors were tied up with string; the floor of the room was of brick, and half of it was grubbed up; bats flew about under the roof, and the smell within——

"Yes, lay the table in the stable," said one of the travellers. "There, at least, one knows what one is breathing."

The windows were opened, so that a little fresh air might find its way in; but quicker than the air came the withered arms and the continual whining, "*Miserabili, Eccellenza!*" On the walls were many inscriptions; half of them were against "*La bella Italia.*"

The supper was served. It consisted of a watery soup, seasoned with pepper and rancid oil. This last dainty played a chief part in the salad; musty eggs and roasted cock's-combs were the best dishes. Even the wine had a strange taste—it was a dreadful mixture.

At night the boxes were placed against the doors. One of the travellers kept watch while the rest slept. The theologian was the sentry. Oh, how close it was in there! The heat oppressed him, the gnats buzzed

and stung, and the *miserabili* outside moaned in their dreams.

"Yes, travelling would be all very well," said the theologian, "if one had no body. If the body could rest, and the mind fly! Wherever I go, I find a want that oppresses my heart: it is something better than the present moment that I desire. Yes, something better—the best; but what is that, and where is it? In my own heart I know very well what I want: I want to attain to a happy goal, the happiest of all!"

And so soon as the word was spoken he found himself at home. The long white curtains hung down from the windows, and in the middle of the room stood a black coffin; in this he was lying in the quiet sleep of death: his wish was fulfilled—his body was at rest and his spirit roaming. "Esteem no man happy who is not yet in his grave," were the words of Solon; here their force was proved anew.

Every corpse is a sphinx of immortality; the sphinx here also in the black sarcophagus answered, what the living man had laid down two days before:

Thou strong, stern Death! Thy silence waketh fear.
 Thou leavest mould'ring gravestones for thy traces.
 Shall not the soul see Jacob's ladder here?
 No resurrection type but churchyard grasses?
 The deepest woes escape the world's dull eye:
 Thou that alone on duty's path hast sped.
 Heavier those duties on thy heart would lie
 Than lies the earth now on thy confined head.

Two forms were moving to and fro in the room. We know them both. They were the Fairy of Care and the

Ambassadress of Happiness. They bent down over the dead man.

"Do you see?" said Care. "What happiness have your goloshes brought to men?"

"They have at least brought a permanent benefit to him who slumbers here," replied Happiness.

"Oh, no!" said Care. "He went away of himself, he was not summoned. His spirit was not strong enough to lift the treasures which he had been destined to lift. I will do him a favour."

And she drew the goloshes from his feet; then the sleep of death was ended, and the awakened man raised himself up. Care vanished, and with her the goloshes disappeared too: doubtless she looked upon them as her property.

THE GARDEN OF PARADISE

ONCE there was a King's son. No one had so many beautiful books as he: everything that had happened in this world he could read there, and could see pictures of it all in lovely copper-plates. Of every people and of every land he could get intelligence; but there was not a word to tell where the Garden of Paradise could be found, and it was just that of which he thought most.

His grandmother had told him, when he was quite little but was to begin to go to school, that every flower in this Paradise Garden was a delicate cake, and the pistils contained the choicest wine; on one of the flowers history was written, and on another geography or tables, so that one had only to eat cake, and one knew a lesson; and the more one ate, the more history, geography, or tables did one learn.

At that time he believed this. But when he became a bigger boy, and learned more and became wiser, he understood well that the splendour in the Garden of Paradise must be of quite a different kind.

"Oh, why did Eve pluck from the Tree of Knowledge? Why did Adam eat the forbidden fruit? If I had been he it would never have happened—then sin would never have come into the world."

That he said then, and he still said it when he was seventeen years old. The Garden of Paradise filled all his thoughts.

One day he walked in the wood. He was walking

quite alone, for that was his greatest pleasure. The evening came, and the clouds gathered together; rain streamed down as if the sky were one single river from which the water was pouring; it was as dark as it usually is at night in the deepest well. Often he slipped on the smooth grass, often he fell over the smooth stones which peered up out of the wet rocky ground. Everything was soaked with water, and there was not a dry thread on the poor Prince. He was obliged to climb over great blocks of stone, where the water spurted from the thick moss. He was nearly fainting. Then he heard a strange rushing, and saw before him a great illuminated cave. In the midst of it burned a fire, so large that a stag might have been roasted at it. And this was in fact being done. A glorious deer had been stuck, horns and all, upon a spit, and was turning slowly between two felled pine trunks. An elderly woman, large and strongly built, looking like a disguised man, sat by the fire, into which she threw one piece of wood after another.

"Come nearer!" said she. "Sit down by the fire and dry your clothes."

"There's a great draught here!" said the Prince; and he sat down on the ground.

"That will be worse when my sons come home," replied the woman. "You are here in the Cavern of the Winds, and my sons are the four winds of the world: can you understand that?"

"Where are your sons?" asked the Prince.

"It is difficult to answer when stupid questions are asked," said the woman. "My sons do business on their own account. They play at shuttlecock with the clouds up yonder in the King's hall."

And she pointed upward.

"Oh, indeed!" said the Prince. "But you speak rather gruffly, by the way, and are not so mild as the women I generally see about me."

"Yes, they have most likely nothing else to do! I must be hard, if I want to keep my sons in order; but I can do it, though they are obstinate fellows. Do you see the four sacks hanging there by the wall? They are just as frightened of those as you used to be of the rod stuck behind the glass. I can bend the lads together, I tell you, and then I pop them into the bag: we don't make any ceremony. There they sit, and may not wander about again until I think fit to allow them. But here comes one of them!"

It was the North Wind, who rushed in with piercing cold; great hailstones skipped about on the floor, and snowflakes fluttered about. He was dressed in a jacket and trousers of bearskin; a cap of sealskin was drawn down over his ears; long icicles hung on his beard, and one hailstone after another rolled from the collar of his jacket.

"Do not go so near the fire directly," said the Prince, "you might get your hands and face frostbitten."

"Frostbitten?" repeated the North Wind, and he laughed aloud. "Cold is exactly what rejoices me most! But what kind of little tailor art thou? How did you find your way into the Cavern of the Winds?"

"He is my guest," interposed the old woman, "and if you're not satisfied with this explanation you may go into the sack: do you understand me?"

You see, that was the right way; and now the North Wind told whence he came and where he had been for almost a month.

"I came from the Polar Sea," said he. "I have been in the bears' icy land with the walrus hunters. I sat and slept on the helm when they went away from the North Cape, and when I awoke now and then, the storm-bird flew round my legs. That's a comical bird! He gives a sharp clap with his wings, and then holds them quite still and shoots along in full career."

"Don't be too long-winded," said the mother of the Winds. "And so you came to the Bears' Island?"

"It is very beautiful there! There's a floor for dancing on as flat as a plate. Half-thawed snow, with a little moss, sharp stones, and skeletons of walruses and polar bears lay around, and likewise gigantic arms and legs of a rusty green colour. One would have thought the sun had never shone there. I blew a little upon the mist, so that one could see the hut: it was a house built of wreck-wood and covered with walrus-skins—the fleshy side turned outward. It was full of green and red, and on the roof sat a live polar bear who was growling. I went to the shore to look after the birds' nests, and saw the unfledged nestlings screaming and opening their beaks; then I blew down into their thousand throats, and taught them to shut their mouths. Farther on the huge walruses were splashing like great maggots with pigs' heads and teeth an ell long!"

"You tell your story well, my son," said the old lady. "My mouth waters when I hear you!"

"Then the hunting began! The harpoon was hurled into the walrus's breast, so that a smoking stream of blood spurted like a fountain over the ice. When I thought of my sport, I blew, and let my sailing ships, the big icebergs, crush the boats between them. Oh,

how the people whistled and how they cried! But I whistled louder than they. They were obliged to throw the dead walruses and their chests and tackle out upon the ice. I shook the snowflakes over them, and let them drive south in their crushed boats with their booty to taste salt water. They'll never come to Bears' Island again!"

"Then you have done a wicked thing!" said the mother of the Winds.

"What good I have done others may tell," replied he. "But here comes a brother from the west. I like him best of all: he tastes of the sea and brings a delicious coolness with him."

"Is that little Zephyr?" asked the Prince.

"Yes, certainly, that is Zephyr," replied the old woman. "But he is not little. Years ago he was a pretty boy, but that's past now."

He looked like a wild man, but he had a broad-brimmed hat on, to save his face. In his hand he held a club of mahogany, hewn in the American mahogany forest. It was no trifle.

"Where do you come from?" said his mother.

"Out of the forest wilderness," said he, "where the water-snake lies in the wet grass, and people don't seem to be wanted."

"What were you doing there?"

"I looked into the deepest river, and watched how it rushed down from the rocks, and turned to spray, and shot up toward the clouds to carry the rainbow. I saw the wild buffalo swimming in the stream, but the stream carried him away. He drifted with the flock of wild ducks that flew up where the water fell down in a cata-

ract. The buffalo had to go down it! That pleased me, and I blew a storm, so that ancient trees were split up into splinters!"

"And have you done nothing else?" asked the old dame.

"I have thrown somersaults in the Savannahs: I have stroked the wild horses and shaken the coco-nut palms. Yes, yes, I have stories to tell! But one must not tell all one knows. You know that, old lady."

And he kissed his mother so roughly that she almost tumbled over. He was a terribly wild young fellow!

Now came the South Wind, with a turban on and a flying Bedouin's cloak.

"It's terribly cold out here!" cried he, and threw some more wood on the fire. "One can feel that the North Wind came first."

"It's so hot that one could roast a Polar bear here," said the North Wind.

"You're a Polar bear yourself," retorted the South Wind.

"Do you want to be put in the sack?" asked the old dame. "Sit upon the stone yonder and tell me where you have been."

"In Africa, mother," he answered. "I was out hunting the lion with the Hottentots in the land of the Kaffirs. Grass grows there in the plains, green as an olive. There the ostrich ran races with me, but I am swifter than he. I came into the desert where the yellow sand lies: it looks there like the bottom of the sea. I met a caravan. The people were killing their last camel to get water to drink, but it was very little they got. The sun burned above and the sand below. The outspread deserts had no bounds. Then I rolled in the

fine loose sand, and whirled it up in great pillars. That was a dance! You should have seen how the dromedary stood there terrified, and the merchant drew the caftan over his head. He threw himself down before me, as before Allah, his God. Now they are buried—a pyramid of sand covers them all. When I some day blow that away, the sun will bleach the white bones; then travellers may see that men have been there before them. Otherwise, one would not believe that, in the desert!”

“So you have done nothing but evil!” exclaimed the mother. “March into the sack!”

And before he was aware, she had seized the South Wind round the body, and popped him into the bag. He rolled about on the floor; but she sat down on the sack, and then he had to keep quiet.

“Those are lively boys of yours,” said the Prince.

“Yes,” she replied, “and I know how to punish them! Here comes the fourth!”

That was the East Wind, who came dressed like a Chinaman.

“Oh! do you come from that region?” said his mother. “I thought you had been in the Garden of Paradise.”

“I don’t fly there till to-morrow,” said the East Wind. “It will be a hundred years to-morrow since I was there. I come from China now, where I danced around the porcelain tower till all the bells jingled again! In the streets the officials were being thrashed: the bamboos were broken upon their shoulders, yet they were high people, from the first to the ninth grade. They cried, ‘Many thanks, my paternal benefactor!’ but it didn’t come from their hearts. And I rang the bells and sang, ‘Tsing, tsang, tsu!’ ”

"You are foolish," said the old dame. "It is a good thing that you are going into the Garden of Paradise to-morrow: that always helps on your education. Drink bravely out of the spring of Wisdom, and bring home a little bottleful for me."

"That I will do," said the East Wind. "But why have you clapped my brother South in the bag? Out with him! He shall tell me about the Phœnix bird, for about that bird the Princess in the Garden of Paradise always wants to hear, when I pay my visit every hundredth year. Open the sack, then you shall be my sweetest of mothers, and I will give you two pocketfuls of tea, green and fresh as I plucked it at the place where it grew!"

"Well, for the sake of the tea, and because you are my darling boy, I will open the sack."

She did so, and the South Wind crept out; but he looked quite downcast, because the strange Prince had seen his disgrace.

"There you have a palm-leaf for the Princess," said the South Wind. "This palm-leaf was given me by the Phœnix bird, the only one who is in the world. With his beak he has scratched upon it a description of all the hundred years he has lived. Now she may read herself how the Phœnix bird set fire to her nest, and sat upon it, and was burned to death like a Hindu's widow. How the dry branches crackled! What a smoke and a steam there was! At last everything burst into flame, and the old Phœnix turned to ashes, but her egg lay red-hot in the fire; it burst with a great bang, and the young one flew out. Now this young one is ruler over all the birds, and the only Phœnix in the world. It has

bitten a hole in the palm-leaf I have given you: that is a greeting to the Princess."

"Let us have something to eat," said the mother of the Winds.

And now they all sat down to eat of the roasted deer. The Prince sat beside the East Wind, and they soon became good friends.

"Just tell me," said the Prince, "what Princess is that about whom there is so much talk here? And where does the Garden of Paradise lie?"

"Ho, ho!" said the East Wind, "do you want to go there? Well, then, fly to-morrow with me! But I must tell you, however, that no man has been there since the time of Adam and Eve. You have read of them in your Bible histories?"

"Yes," said the Prince.

"When they were driven away, the Garden of Paradise sank into the earth; but it kept its warm sunshine, its mild air, and all its splendour. The Queen of the Fairies lives there, and there lies the Island of Happiness, where death never comes, and where it is beautiful. Sit upon my back to-morrow, and I will take you with me: I think it can very well be done. But now leave off talking, for I want to sleep."

And then they all went to rest.

In the early morning the Prince awoke, and was not a little astonished to find himself high above the clouds. He was sitting on the back of the East Wind, who was faithfully holding him: they were so high in the air that the woods and fields, rivers and lakes, looked as if they were painted on a map below them.

"Good morning!" said the East Wind. "You might

very well sleep a little longer, for there is not much to be seen on the flat country under us, unless you care to count the churches. They stand out like dots of chalk on the green carpet."

What he called green carpet was field and meadow.

"It was rude of me not to say good-bye to your mother and your brothers," said the Prince.

"When one is asleep one must be excused," replied the East Wind.

And then they flew on faster than ever. One could hear it in the tops of the trees, for when they passed over them the leaves and twigs rustled; one could hear it on the sea and on the lakes, for when they flew by the water rose higher, and the great ships bowed themselves toward the water like swimming swans.

Toward evening, when it became dark, the great towns looked charming, for lights were burning below, here and there; it was just as when one has lighted a piece of paper, and sees all the little sparks which vanish one after another. And the Prince clapped his hands; but the East Wind begged him to let that be, and rather to hold fast, otherwise he might easily fall down and get caught on a church spire.

The eagle in the dark woods flew lightly, but the East Wind flew more lightly still. The Cossack on his little horse skimmed swiftly over the surface of the earth, but the Prince skimmed more swiftly still.

"Now you can see the Himalayas," said the East Wind. "That is the highest mountain range in Asia. Now we shall soon get to the Garden of Paradise."

Then they turned more to the south, and soon the air was fragrant with flowers and spices, figs and pomegranates grew wild, and the wild vine bore clusters of

red and purple grapes. Here both alighted and stretched themselves on the soft grass, where the flowers nodded to the wind, as though they would have said "Welcome!"

"Are we now in the Garden of Paradise?" asked the Prince.

"Not at all," replied the East Wind. "But we shall soon get there. Do you see the rocky wall yonder, and the great cave, where the vines cluster like a broad green curtain? Through that we shall pass. Wrap yourself in your cloak. Here the sun scorches you, but a step farther it will be icy cold. The bird which hovers past the cave has one wing in the region of summer and the other in the wintry cold."

"So this is the way to the Garden of Paradise?" observed the Prince.

They went into the cave. Ugh! but it was icy cold there, but this did not last long. The East Wind spread out his wings, and they gleamed like the brightest fire. What a cave was that! Great blocks of stone, from which the water dripped down, hung over them in the strangest shapes; sometimes it was so narrow that they had to creep on their hands and knees, sometimes as lofty and broad as in the open air. The place looked like a number of mortuary chapels, with dumb organ-pipes, the organs themselves being petrified.

"We are going through the way of death to the Garden of Paradise, are we not?" inquired the Prince.

The East Wind answered not a syllable, but he pointed forward to where a lovely blue light gleamed upon them. The stone blocks over their heads became more and more like a mist, and at last looked like a white cloud in the moonlight. Now they were in a de-

liciously mild air, fresh as on the hills, fragrant as among the roses of the valley. There ran a river, clear as the air itself, and the fishes were like silver and gold; purple eels, flashing out blue sparks at every moment, played in the water below; and the broad water-plant leaves shone in the colours of the rainbow; the flower itself was an orange-coloured burning flame, to which the water gave nourishment, as the oil to the burning lamp; a bridge of marble, strong, indeed, but so lightly built that it looked as if made of lace and glass beads, led them across the water to the Island of Happiness, where the Garden of Paradise bloomed.

Were they palm-trees that grew here, or gigantic water plants? Such verdant mighty trees the Prince had never beheld; the most wonderful climbing plants hung there in long festoons, as one only sees them illuminated in gold and colours on the margins of gold missal-books or twined among the initial letters. Here were the strangest groupings of birds, flowers, and twining lines. Close by, in the grass, stood a flock of peacocks with their shining starry trains outspread.

Yes, it was really so! But when the Prince touched these, he found they were not birds, but plants; they were great burdocks, which shone like the peacock's gorgeous train. The lion and the tiger sprang to and fro like agile cats among the green bushes, which were fragrant as the blossom of the olive-tree; and the lion and the tiger were tame. The wild wood-pigeon shone like the most beautiful pearl, and beat her wings against the lion's mane; and the antelope, usually so timid, stood by nodding its head, as if it wished to play too.

Now came the Fairy of Paradise. Her garb shone like the sun, and her countenance was cheerful like that

of a happy mother when she is well pleased with her child. She was young and beautiful, and was followed by a number of pretty maidens, each with a gleaming star in her hair. The East Wind gave her the written leaf from the Phoenix bird, and her eyes shone with pleasure.

She took the Prince by the hand and led him into her palace, where the walls had the colour of a splendid tulip-leaf when it is held up in the sunlight. The ceiling was a great sparkling flower, and the more one looked up at it, the deeper did its cup appear. The Prince stepped to the window and looked through one of the panes. Here he saw the Tree of Knowledge, with the serpent, and Adam and Eve were standing close by.

"Were they not driven out?" he asked.

And the Fairy smiled, and explained to him that Time had burned in the picture upon that pane, but not as people are accustomed to see pictures. No, there was life in it: the leaves of the trees moved; men came and went as in a dissolving view. And he looked through another pane, and there was Jacob's dream, with the ladder reaching up into heaven, and the angels with great wings were ascending and descending. Yes, everything that had happened in the world lived and moved in the glass panes; such cunning pictures only Time could burn in.

The Fairy smiled, and led him into a great lofty hall, whose walls appeared transparent. Here were portraits, and each face looked fairer than the last. There were to be seen millions of happy ones who smiled and sang, so that it flowed together into a melody; the uppermost were so small that they looked like the smallest

rosebud when it is drawn as a point upon paper. And in the midst of the hall stood a great tree with rich pendent boughs; golden apples, great and small, hung like oranges among the leaves. That was the Tree of Knowledge, of whose fruit Adam and Eve had eaten. From each leaf fell a shining red dewdrop; it was as though the tree wept tears of blood.

"Let us now get into the boat," said the Fairy, "then we will enjoy some refreshment on the heaving waters. The boat rocks, yet does not quit its station; but all the lands of the earth will glide past in our sight."

And it was wonderful to behold how the whole coast moved. There came the lofty snow-covered Alps, with clouds and black pine-trees; the horn sounded with its melancholy note, and the shepherd trolled his merry song in the valley. Then the banana-trees bent their long hanging branches over the boat; coal-black swans swam on the water, and the strangest animals and flowers showed themselves upon the shore. That was New Holland, the fifth great division of the world, which glided past with a background of blue hills. They heard the song of the priests, and saw the savages dancing to the sound of drums and of bone trumpets. Egypt's pyramids, towering aloft to the clouds, overturned pillars and sphinxes, half buried in the sand, sailed past likewise. The Northern Lights shone over the extinct volcanoes of the Pole—it was a firework that no one could imitate. The Prince was quite happy, and he saw a hundred times more than we can relate here.

"And can I always stay here?" asked he.

"That depends upon yourself," answered the Fairy.

"If you do not, like Adam, yield to the temptation to do what is forbidden, you may always remain here."

"I shall not touch the apples on the Tree of Knowledge!" said the Prince. "Here are thousands of fruits just as beautiful as those."

"Search your own heart, and if you are not strong enough, go away with the East Wind that brought you hither. He is going to fly back, and will not show himself here again for a hundred years: the time will pass for you in this place as if it were a hundred hours, but it is a long time for the temptation of sin. Every evening, when I leave you, I shall have to call to you, 'Come with me!' and I shall have to beckon to you with my hand; but stay where you are: do not go with me, or your longing will become greater with every step. You will then come into the hall where the Tree of Knowledge grows; I sleep under its fragrant pendent boughs; you will bend over me, and I must smile; but if you press a kiss upon my mouth, the Paradise will sink deep into the earth and be lost to you. The keen wind of the desert will rush around you, the cold rain drop upon your head, and sorrow and woe will be your portion."

"I shall stay here!" said the Prince.

And the East Wind kissed him on the forehead, and said:

"Be strong, and we shall meet here again in a hundred years. Farewell! farewell!"

And the East Wind spread out his broad wings, and they flashed like sheet lightning in harvest-time, or like the Northern Lights in the cold winter.

"Farewell! farewell!" sounded from among the

flowers and the trees. Storks and pelicans flew away in rows like fluttering ribbons, and bore him company to the boundary of the garden.

"Now we will begin our dances!" cried the Fairy. "At the end, when I dance with you, when the sun goes down, you will see me beckon to you; you will hear me call to you, 'Come with me;' but do not obey. For a hundred years I must repeat this every evening; every time, when the trial is past, you will gain more strength; at last you will not think of it at all. This evening is the first time. Now I have warned you."

And the Fairy led him into a great hall of white transparent lilies; the yellow stamens in each flower formed a little golden harp, which sounded like stringed instrument and flute. The most beautiful maidens, floating and slender, clad in gauzy mist, glided by in the dance, and sang of the happiness of living, and declared that they would never die, and that the Garden of Paradise would bloom for ever.

And the sun went down. The whole sky shone like gold, which gave to the lilies the hue of the most glorious roses; and the Prince drank of the foaming wine which the maidens poured out for him, and felt a happiness he had never before known. He saw how the background of the hall opened, and the Tree of Knowledge stood in a glory which blinded his eyes; the singing there was soft and lovely as the voice of his dear mother, and it was as though she sang, "My child! my beloved child!"

Then the Fairy beckoned to him, and called out persuasively:

"Come with me! Come with me!"

And he rushed toward her, forgetting his promise,

forgetting it the very first evening; and still she beckoned and smiled. The fragrance, the delicious fragrance around became stronger, the harps sounded far more lovely, and it seemed as though the millions of smiling heads in the hall, where the tree grew, nodded and sang, "One must know everything—man is the lord of the earth." And they were no longer drops of blood that the Tree of Knowledge wept; they were red shining stars which he seemed to see.

"Come! come!" the quivering voice still cried, and at every step the Prince's cheeks burned more hotly and his blood flowed more rapidly.

"I must!" said he. "It is no sin, it cannot be one. Why not follow beauty and joy? I only want to see her asleep; there will be nothing lost if I only refrain from kissing her; and I will not kiss her: I am strong and have a resolute will!"

And the Fairy threw off her shining cloak and bent back the branches, and in another moment she was hidden among them.

"I have not yet sinned," said the Prince, "and I will not."

And he pushed the boughs aside. There she slept already, beautiful as only a fairy in the Garden of Paradise can be. She smiled in her dreams, and he bent over her, and saw tears quivering beneath her eyelids!

"Do you weep for me?" he whispered. "Weep not, thou glorious woman! Now only I understand the bliss of Paradise! It streams through my blood, through my thoughts; the power of the angel and of increasing life I feel in my mortal body! Let what will happen to me now; one moment like this is wealth enough!"

And he kissed the tears from her eyes—his mouth touched hers.

Then there resounded a clap of thunder so loud and dreadful that no one had ever heard the like, and everything fell down; and the beautiful Fairy and the charming Paradise sank down, deeper and deeper. The Prince saw it vanish into the black night; like a little bright star it gleamed out of the far distance. A deadly chill ran through his frame, and he closed his eyes and lay for a long time as one dead.

The cold rain fell upon his face, the keen wind roared round his head, and then his senses returned to him.

"What have I done?" he sighed. "I have sinned like Adam—sinned so that Paradise has sunk deep down!"

And he opened his eyes, and the star in the distance—the star that gleamed like the Paradise that had sunk down, was the morning star in the sky.

He stood up, and found himself in the great forest, close by the Cave of the Winds, and the mother of the Winds sat by his side: she looked angry, and raised her arm in the air.

"The very first evening!" said she. "I thought it would be so! Yes, if you were my son, you would have to go into the sack!"

"Yes, he shall go in there!" said Death. He was a strong old man, with a scythe in his hand, and with great black wings. "Yes, he shall be laid in his coffin, but not yet: I only register him, and let him wander awhile in the world to expiate his sins and to grow better. But one day I shall come. When he least expects it, I shall clap him in the black coffin, put him on my head, and fly up toward the star. There, too, blooms the Garden of Paradise; and if he is good and pious he will

go in there; but if his thoughts are evil, and his heart still full of sin, he will sink with his coffin deeper than Paradise has sunk, and only every thousandth year I shall fetch him, that he may sink deeper, or that he may attain to the star—the shining star up yonder!”

